

SCHWENCKFELD'S PARTICIPATION

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# Schwenckfeld's Participation in the Eucharistic Controversy of the Sixteenth Century



BY

FREDERICK WILLIAM LOETSCHER



A Dissertation Presented to the Faculty  
of Princeton University for  
the Degree of Doctor  
of Philosophy

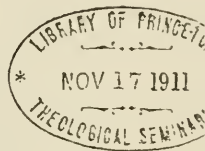


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## PREFACE.

The dissenters of the Reformation in Germany, no less than in the other countries of Europe, had to wait a long time before the first attempts were made to accord them anything like a fair or adequate historical treatment. The political or secular historian lacked the desire and the fitness to do justice to the numerous religious sects in that age of bitter theological controversies, while at least the earliest of modern ecclesiastical historians betrayed a narrow confessional interest which was not only blind to many a virtue in the nobler heretics, but also quite incapable of estimating the salutary influence of some of the heresies themselves. It was not till the middle of the last century, therefore, that the first really meritorious efforts were made to study the so-called fanatics and sectarians of this period with the sober spirit of scientific investigation.

It is especially to be regretted that so little attention had been paid to the life and work of Caspar Schwenckfeld. To be sure, Arnold in his *Unpartheyische Kirchen- und Ketzerhistorie* and Salig in his *Historie der Augspurgischen Confession* had succeeded to some extent in securing a more correct estimate of the much misunderstood reformer. But it still remains true, that when we regard his strong and beautiful character, his native ability and his acquired powers, the amount as well as the originality and suggestiveness of his literary output, the extent of his intercourse with the leading spirits of his age and his influence upon them, or the nature of his achievement as a polemic theologian and the founder of a sect which, though small, has added to the lustre of his name, we cannot but feel that here is "a man who, in spite of his eminent significance for the history of the Reformation, has not as yet met with a proper appreciation."\*

The following dissertation, which is substantially a reprint from *The Princeton Theological Review* of this year,† endeavors to set forth Schwenckfeld's peculiar theory of the eucharist as related both to the teachings of his opponents and to his own system of theological speculations.

\* Gerbert, *Geschichte der Strassburger Sectenbewegung zur Zeit der Reformation*, 1889, p. 132.

† See the July and October numbers of the *Review*, pp. 352-386, 454-500.





The difficulties of the task are due chiefly to the character of Schwenckfeld's works. His most important treatises, no less than his letters, are purely occasional writings, composed, at least in some instances, with incredible speed. The style is loose, repetitious, often Luther-like in its bold and energetic one-sidednesses, unconventional and inconsistent in theological terminology, and therefore often strangely confusing alike to his contemporaries and to modern interpreters, the uncertainty of the language being only increased by the desire of this deeply spiritual reformer to express his thoughts and feelings as much as possible in the very words of Scripture. Profoundly interested in the religious questions of the day, but never overcoming the layman's lack of training in theological science, he never, it must be confessed, succeeded, in spite of his undoubted dialectic gifts and his extensive acquaintance with the Bible and the greatest of the Church fathers, in bringing all the elements of his thought into a perfectly harmonious system.

These considerations, and above all his spiritualistic tendency, which in large part explains these phenomena, will serve as an apology, if one were needed, for the somewhat numerous quotations from the sources: a mystic must be allowed to speak his own dialect. It is at least hoped that these citations, selected from the great mass of possible references, are such characteristic utterances that they can fairly be regarded as furnishing an accurate and complete conception of Schwenckfeld's theory of the Supper.

I take this opportunity of acknowledging my indebtedness to Charles S. Thayer, Ph.D., Librarian of Hartford Theological Seminary, for the loan of some of the sources, and especially to Prof. H. W. Kriebel, author of *The Schwenckfelders in Pennsylvania*, who kindly placed at my disposal his valuable collection of Schwenckfeldiana. Helpful suggestions concerning the treatment of the theme were received from the Rev. C. D. Hartranft, D.D., the editor-in-chief of the *Corpus Schwenckfeldianorum*, now appearing, as well as from Dr. Joh. Fieker, Professor of Church History at Strassburg in Alsace.

PRINCETON, N. J.,

F. W. L.

October, 1906.



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Schwenckfeld's works have never been published in full. Four folio volumes appearing shortly after his death contain his most important literary remains. They bear the following titles:

- (A) *Epistolar Des Edlen von Gott hochbegnadeten theuwrn Manns Caspar Schwenckfeldts von Ossing, seliger gedächtnis, Christliche Lehrhafft Missiven oder Sendbriefß, die er in zeit seines Lebens vom XXV. Jare bis auff das LV. . . . . geschrieben, etc., etc. DER ERSTE THEIL. 1566. Pp. XXVII, SS0. Referred to in the text by the symbol A.*
- (B) *Epistolar des Edlen von Gott hochbegnadeten Herren Caspar Schwenckfeldts von Ossing, . . . . . Christliche lehrhafft Sendbriefße und schrifftn die er in Zeit seines lebens vom XXV. Jarc an biss auff das LXI. . . . . geschrieben, etc. DER ANDER THEIL, in vier Bücher underseiden. 1570, pp. 146 and 678.*

This therefore is the first of the four books that were to have contained his correspondence in regard to the four great parties in the Church of his day, the Romanists, the Lutherans, the Zwinglians, and the Anabaptists. But the third and fourth volumes never appeared. The pages of this volume bear the caption, *Sendbriefß von der Bepstischen Leere und Glauben. Cited as B.*

- (C) *Das zweite Buch des andern theils des Epistolars. Darinn Herren Caspar Schwenckfeldts Sendbriefße begriffen, die er auf der Lutherischen Glauben, Leere, Sacrament und Kirchen, zum theil an Lutherische, zum theil sonst an gutherzige Personen geschrieben. 1570. Pp. 1022. Cited as C.*
- (D) *Der Erste Theil Der Christlichen Orthodoxischen Bücher und schrifftn des Edlen, theuren. . . Caspar Schwenckfeldts vom Hauss Ossing, etc., etc. 1564. Pp. 974. The other parts of this series never appeared. Cited as D.*

There are numerous smaller volumes containing additional treatises and letters, as well as later editions of some of the works collected in the four folio volumes. Of those to which I have had access the following writings, nearly all of which are printed with other works, are the most important bearing upon the subject in question:

- Von der Speise des Ewigen Lebens. 1547.*
- Ein Schöne und Herrliche Ausslegung ober das gantze sechste Kapitel Johannis, von der Speise des Ewigen Lebens. 1595, but written in 1550.*
- Von den Wercken Christi und Wie die Evangelia nach dem geistlichen Sinn recht verstanden sollen werden. Item, Vom anpt des H. Geistes in der christlichen Kirchenn.*
- Ein Christlich Bedenken, Ob Judas unnd die unglaubigen falschen Christen den leib und das blut Jesu Christe im Nachmal des Herren empfangen, oder auch noch heute empfangen oder niessen mögen.*
- Antzaigung Zwayer Artickeln warumb dess Luthers Discipel fürnemlich Herrn Caspar Schwenckfelden und die Mitbekenner der glorien und rainen Leere dess Euangelii Christi hasscn, verfolgen, und fälschlich beschrayen.*



- Von der Gantzheit Christi, beede im Leiden und in seiner Herrlichkeit.* 1593.  
*Ausslegung dess Euangelii Marci VIII.* 1547.  
*Ausslegung dess Euangelii Luce XIII.* 1547.  
*Verantwortung und Defension für Casparn Schwenckfelden deren puncten unnd Irrthumbe damit ihn Doctor Joachim von Wot . . . unrecht beschuldigt.* 1542. 16mo, pp. 129.  
*Apologia: dass ist Verantwortung für Herrn Caspar Schwenckfelden und grundtliche Erklerung, dass er die Menschait Christi gar kains Wegs verlaucknet.* 16mo, pp. LXXXVII. (By some follower of Schwenckfeld.)  
*Ableinung D. Luthers Molediction, so erst durch Flacium Illyricum wider mich im truck ist publiciert worden. Item, Vom rechten grund und verstande dess H. Sacraments des Herrn Nachtmals.* 1555.  
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*Auffdeckung des letzten schmach und grawliche Lügenbuchs so der grosse feind Jhesu Christi des cynigen lebendigen Worts Gottes Flacius Illyricus Anno 1557 wider Herrn Casp. Schwenckfelden in Truck gegeben hat.* 1558. (By a follower.)

The less important works are cited in the appropriate places. As secondary sources the works of the leading reformers who came into contact with Schwenckfeld are to be consulted, especially those of Luther, Zwingli, and Melancthon.

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## SCHWENCKFELD'S PARTICIPATION IN THE EUCCHARISTIC CONTROVERSY OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

THE eucharistic controversies of the Reformation, like the related Christological controversies of the ancient Church, present, on the whole, a disheartening picture; one in which the harsh uncharitableness, not to say the violent hatred, among brethren professing devotion to a common Lord is too seldom relieved by examples of heroic fidelity to religious convictions, combined with the conciliatory spirit of Christian love. In each case the conflict was followed by momentous and in part disastrous consequences in the spheres both of constructive theologizing and of ecclesiastical and political life. In each case, however, the issues involved must be said, when their full significance is realized, to have been worth the arduous attempt made to settle them.

The Lord's Supper had, of course, been an important subject of controversy in the Middle Ages.\* But it was reserved for the evangelical spirit of the sixteenth century not only to undermine the dogma of transubstantiation sanctioned by the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, but also to bring into clearer prominence many a hitherto neglected factor of the problem concerning the sacramental feast. The issue was far from being merely liturgical.† The contest was so long and bitter just because it was rightly understood that the most precious treasures of the rediscovered

\* Loofs, however, in his article, "Abendmahl," in Hauck's *Realencyklopädie*, I, p. 65, is unduly anxious to maintain that, barring Carlstadt's theory, the "positive thoughts of the Reformation period" concerning the eucharist are "not new." The context, to be sure, restricts this generalization to more moderate bounds. Certainly so far as Schwenckfeld, for example, is concerned, Loofs' statement can be applied only to the finally accepted symbolic doctrines of the Supper. Cf. Goetz, *Die Abendmahlsfrage in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung*, p. 75, n. 2.

† It is interesting to observe, however, as Harnack reminds us (*Dogmengeschichte*, III<sup>3</sup>, pp. 746, 762), that it is possible in a sense to construe Luther's whole reformation as a "reformation of the public worship." Rome had made the mass the very centre of her church service, and the work of the reformers in its negative but at the same time its most direct bearings was an attack in the name of subjective religion upon the citadel of the Romish liturgy.





Gospel were at stake. The mere statement of the controverted points led thinking men to connect their views of the Supper with the deepest verities of their faith. It lay in the nature of the case, therefore, that sooner or later nearly every dogmatic problem of the day would be related to the question which, above all others, was beginning to divide the Protestants.

In ascertaining the nature and value of the contribution made by any one of the reformers to the doctrine of the Lord's Supper it is necessary, therefore, to consider his views both from the standpoint of the fundamental principles of his system of thought and in the light of his historical surroundings. For to none of the contestants did the eucharistic question appear as an end in itself, nor could any one of them attempt the solution of the problem without coming into conflict with various classes of opponents.

To these considerations special weight ought to be given in the case of Caspar Schwenckfeld.\* For on the one hand he belongs to that class of theological writers who have had the misfortune of being seriously misunderstood because persistently branded as "mystics."† It is of course to be admitted that his religious life revealed itself more in the language of strong and deep feeling than in any clearly articulated system of dialectics. It is likewise true, as Dorner‡ reminds us, that it must have been easy for his contemporaries to represent his ideas as "only a perverse lot of the most wondrous idiosyncrasies." Moreover, he shows many points of contact and signs of kinship with some of the extreme spiritualistic fanatics. But for this very reason it is necessary to cast aside all prejudices and to lay hold of the inner connections, if such can be found, among these alleged fantastic

\* The spelling of the name is by no means uniform. Kriebel, *The Schwenckfelders in Pennsylvania*, p. 1, n. 1, cites thirteen variations, and others might be added. Schneider gives some valid reasons in favor of the consonantal combination *ck* and a final *d* instead of *dt* or only *t*. See his tract, *Ueber den geschichtlichen Verlauf der Reformation in Liegnitz*, etc., Abt. 1, p. 27, n. 10.

† That the epithet in some sense may properly be applied to Schwenckfeld it would be idle to deny. But what after all is mysticism? Inge, in his Bampton Lectures (1899) on *Christian Mysticism*, ventures the assertion (p. 1): "No word in our language—not even 'Socialism'—has been employed more loosely than 'Mysticism,'" and in the Appendix he cites and criticises some twenty-six attempts by men of all schools of thought to define the term. With what propriety we may speak of Schwenckfeld as a mystic will, we hope, become thoroughly clear as we proceed. For the present it may be most advantageous to content ourselves with the statement that the word may as a matter of fact have a good as well as a bad sense.

‡ *Lehre von der Person Christi*, p. 624.



and heterogeneous elements. Great credit is here due to Erbkam,\* whose treatment of Schwenckfeld is still, on the whole, the best; and to Baur,† who with his usual critical acumen saw the possibility and the need of doing Schwenckfeld a needed service by bringing out more clearly the hidden speculative elements of his system.‡ These and other writers have accustomed students of Schwenckfeld to the double conviction, not only that his views have a coherence that makes them worthy of investigation, but that of all the dissenting thinkers of the German Reformation he is the most systematic.§ Whatever estimate we may form of his "mysticism," we shall expect to discover in him at least somewhat more of logic and speculative strength than the traditional prejudices permitted some of the earlier historical writers to find.||

Not only, however, does the alleged mystical character of Schwenckfeld's theologizing necessitate our bringing his doctrine of the Supper into the closest possible relation to his whole system, but it is likewise more than ordinarily important, on the other hand,

\* *Geschichte der protestantischen Sekten*, pp. 357-475.

† *Die christliche Lehre von der Versöhnung in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung* (1838); *Die christl. Lehre von der Dreieinigkeit*, etc. (1843); *Zur Geschichte der prot. Mystik*, in *Theol. Jahrbücher* (1848).

‡ Baur of course had no intention of converting Schwenckfeld the mystic into Schwenckfeld the rationalist, but the transformation, easy enough in itself and doubtless most congenial to a mind like Baur's, may be said, in spite of the retention of the word "mysticism," to have been fairly accomplished. After all it is only a matter of taking Schwenckfeld's temperature at different times, now catching him in the warmth of a fervent piety and now finding him on the chilly heights of some abstract speculation. But though Baur (*Theologische Jahrbücher*, 1848, p. 527) professes to be able to distinguish the "speculative content of the ideas from the peculiar form in which they have found expression," he can scarcely be acquitted of the charge of reading into Schwenckfeld some of his own ideas as to how the reformer might have avoided apparent or real contradictions. Dorner (*l.c.*, p. 625) gives a truer judgment: "Doch kann auch nicht behauptet werden, dass er sich stets gleich blieb oder dass nicht unlösliche Widersprüche in seinem System liegen."

§ Comp. Fieker, *Handschriften des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts*, Kleine Ausgabe, Tafel 27, p. 75: "Er ist unter den religiösen Subjectivisten der Systematiker: sein mystischer Spiritualismus ist mit einem dogmatischen System verbunden, welches seine Ueberzeugungen geschlossener wirken lässt."

|| See, e.g., Planck's capricious statement (*Geschichte der Entstehung . . . unseres protestantischen Lehrbegriffs*, Vol. V, Th. 1, p. 184): "Diess war wenigstens im Ganzen die Wendung, welche die Ideen Schwenckfelds genommen, oder diess war ungefähr die Form, in welcher sich seine Phantasie alles, was dabei für die Vernunft undenkbar war, denkbar gemacht hatte. Es ist leicht möglich, dass sie sich zu Zeiten in seinem Kopf auf eine etwas verschiedene Art zusammenfügten, denn Vorstellungen, die keinen vernünftigen Zusammenhang zulassen, sind der mannigfaltigsten Zusammensetzung fähig."



to interpret such views as his in the light of the historical situation in which he found himself. This is so not only because of the unusually extensive connections which he had with the most diverse parties in the Church,\* but more particularly because every mystical movement in history is necessarily colored by the specific forms of religious deadness against which it rises to utter its protest.

Fortunately Schwenckfeld informs us with admirable fullness concerning his relations to his contemporaries.† Born about 1490,‡ of an ancient and aristocratic family in Ossig, near Lüben, in Silesia, reared a strict Catholic, educated at Liegnitz, Cologne, Frankfort-on-the-Oder, and at other but unknown institutions, serving about twelve years at the courts of several Silesian princes, this deeply religious young nobleman became one of the first in that section of Germany to embrace the evangelical cause.§ Compelled in 1521 by reason of an affection of the ear to return to private life, he became a diligent student of the Scriptures.|| He kept in touch with the leaders of the new movement, making several trips to Wittenberg and exchanging letters with Luther himself. Devoted heart and soul to the task of establishing the Reformation in Silesia, he secured in 1523 the able coöperation of a former notary and canon, Valentine Krautwald.

But irreconcilable differences soon arose between Schwenckfeld and the Wittenbergers, resulting in 1527 in a complete and irre-

\* In this fact lies the chief justification for Keller's assertion (*Die Reformation und die älteren Reformparteien*, p. 463): "Es wäre von der höchsten Wichtigkeit, die umfangreiche und interessante Correspondenz Schwenckfelds ans Licht zu ziehen; man würde überraschende Resultate daraus gewinnen."

† But his works present only meagre details as to his early life. Hoffmann's account, *Caspar Schwenckfelds Leben und Lehren*, I, extending to only 1524 and constituting the first of six parts of what may become an adequate biography, draws largely from other important sources. Keim and Gerbert present the leading facts concerning Schwenckfeld's career in southern Germany. Hampe, *Zur Biographie Kaspars von Schwenckfeld*, 1882, is minute but brief, extending to 1539. Arnold, Salig, Planck, Döllinger, Erbkam, etc., give only the salient biographical data.

‡ Neither the date of his birth (1489 or 1490) nor that of his death (1561 or 1562) has as yet been fixed.

§ The exact date of his conversion cannot be fixed. Hoffmann, p. 10, is inclined to put it as early as 1517; Möller is at least safe in declaring that by 1519 Schwenckfeld had been won to the Lutheran cause (*Kirchengeschichte*, III, p. 444).

|| Greek and Hebrew he seems to have acquired considerably later, certainly not before 1528. Cf. Erbkam, *l.c.*, p. 363, n. 1. Hase is clearly in error, however, when he declares (*Kirchengeschichte*, III, 1, p. 300): "Noch in seinem 64. Jahre lernte er Griechisch, um mit eigenen Augen zuzusehen, was Christus geredet habe." Letters and treatises written long before this evince a considerable knowledge of the Greek Testament and the Fathers.





mediable rupture. It is therefore worth while ascertaining, at the very outset, the logic of this event, the real turning-point in his career as a reformer.

He had prided himself upon being an ardent disciple of Luther,\* and though from the beginning he could not entirely agree with him,† he never forgot the incalculable service the great reformer had rendered to the cause of religion.‡ The force of sacred convictions, however, proved stronger than this sense of gratitude, deepened though it was by a peculiar reverence for his spiritual father. Schwenckfeld perceived that his whole conception of Christianity differed so radically from Luther's that there was no possibility of a substantial agreement.§ The common representation, not sufficiently modified even by Erbkam and Hahn, that the divergencies of opinion related primarily and chiefly to the eucharistic controversy opened by Carlstadt in 1524 fails, as Baur has pointed out,|| to look at the facts from the right angle. The

\* C 300d (anno 1531): "Ich habe nich der Lutherischen Lehre erkundet und seines Evangelii gebraucht mit möglichem Fleiss acht Jahre." Cf. C. 574c: "Denn ich habe, ohne Ruhm zu reden, in Doctor Luthers Büchern wohl so viel als Ihr studiert und (wollt mir's verzeihen) vielleicht ehe Ihr das a, b, c gelernt viel seiner Schriften mit möglichem Fleiss hinten und vorn gelesen, auch mit Gebet nach der Regel Pauli *omnia probate* fleissig erforscht und bewäret."

† B 193b: "dass ich mit ihrem Evangelio nicht stimme, auch von Anfang nie gänzlich gestimmt habe."

‡ Nothing more beautifully reveals Schwenckfeld's nobility of character than the oft-repeated expressions of his grateful appreciation of Luther's world-historical importance, even after the latter had coined the vulgar nickname 'Stenckfeld' and in other ways outdone himself in vituperative abuse. See especially C 499 sq., 599d, D 4, 5, 6, 526, and C 701d, where he informs Luther under date of October 12, 1543: "Denn ob ich wohl nicht in allen Puncten euch kann unterschreiben, noch mit euch stimmen, so erkenne ich doch, dass ich euch nach Gott und der Wahrheit alle Ehre, Liebe, und Güte schuldig weil ich eures Dienstes anfänglich mitgenossen, so wohl als ich Gott den Herrn für euch nach meinem armen Vermögen zu bitten noch nicht habe unterlassen." Cf. C 745b 690d.

§ The influence on Schwenckfeld of the mystical Tauler and the *German Theology* only widened the gulf. Schwenckfeld (C 596a) speaks with admiration, though not with unconditional approval, of his teacher Tauler. The fact is that Schwenckfeld forsook Luther for Tauler, whereas Luther, in opposition to the fanatical excesses of some of the spiritualists, felt it necessary more and more to recede from Tauler and to check the subjective tendencies he had himself championed in the opening days of the Reformation. Even before the disturbances at Wittenberg, however, Luther's mysticism began to decline. It must be said to have reached its summit as early as 1518 or 1519. Cf. Hering, *Die Mystik Luthers*, etc., p. 292 sq.

|| *Theol. Jahrb.*, 1848, pp. 504-506; cf. also his *Lehre von der Versöhnung*, p. 462. For whatever fault may be found with Baur's one-sided emphasis on the speculative elements in Schwenckfeld at the expense of the strictly practical, that is



causes of the break must be distinguished from its mere occasion. Prior to all questions about the nature of the Lord's presence in the sacramental ordinance or about the constitution of his person is the consideration of his very purpose or mission in the world. Nothing less than the whole problem of the nature of salvation—the question how the sinful soul may be reunited with God—was Schwenckfeld's basal concern. He could not accept Luther's explanation of the Supper, but this inability was only indicative of, and conditioned by, his inability to accept without safeguarding modifications the doctrine which his chief opponent came to regard as the article of a standing or falling Church, justification by faith alone. Implied in this, as we shall see, was a generically different view as to the Word, the Sacraments, and the Church, and likewise as to the nature of the process of salvation itself.

Schwenckfeld, we repeat, was governed at the outset by thoroughly practical considerations. He wanted the new presentation of the Gospel to bring forth, in the lives of his fellow-men, an abundant fruit unto holiness. He was deeply grieved by some of those epigrammatic but easily misunderstood half-truths with which Luther so often sought to help his own and his partisans' faith. He feared, and his experience more and more justified his fears, that Luther's gospel was becoming popular at the expense, to some extent, of sound morality.\* He deplored the lack of good works, the absence of strict discipline, the interference of the avaricious princes in the affairs of the Church, and the manifestly false security of many professed Christians the chief article of whose creed was that their organization was the only one worthy of comparison with that of the Apostles. The Lutherans are often characterized, along with the Romanists, as Antichrist, because, according to him, they have no spiritual discernment, but mistake the letter for the spirit, a historical for a vital faith in Christ.†

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of the religious and moral as distinguished from the theological or philosophic interests that dominated the reformer, there can be no doubt that in the main his strictures upon Hahn and Erbkam are borne out by the facts.

\* This does not mean, as the charge so often but falsely brought against Luther's gospel maintains, that he furnished no adequate basis or motive for ethical conduct. On the contrary, no one of the reformers better understood either the need or the method of supplying morality with the motive power of a deep religious faith. But his words not seldom seemed to mock his principles, and unfortunately his devoted followers were apt to swear by the caricature of their leader rather than by his real self. Cf. Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte*, III<sup>2</sup>, p. 784, n. 1, and Seeberg, *Dogmengeschichte*, II, p. 244, n. 1.

† This charge has of course ever been a familiar expedient in the hands of spir-



The real nature and extent of the differences will become more apparent as we proceed. Enough has been said to give point to the present contention that the divergencies on the eucharistic question were after all only symptomatic of those deeper differences that concerned the very essence of the faith.\*

Unable as Schwenckfeld was to identify himself with the Lutheran movement, he had become too thorough a Protestant to find it possible to reënter the Roman Church. He is well aware, indeed, that his works were at times better received by the Romanists than by the Lutherans,† and in 1528 he even declares that if only he could have freedom of conscience he would rather join the former than the latter.‡ But the logic of his situation kept him true to Protestantism. He rejected the hierarchy, the priesthood, the mass, the confessional, and the ceremonialism of the Romish Church, as well as all her dogmas that clashed with his distinctive peculiarities. If the Lutherans made too much of the letter of Scripture to the neglect of its spirit, the Romanists made too much of meritorious works to the disparagement of genuine faith. Rome gave too much scope to the mere traditions of men. In fine, he was bound as a real Protestant to oppose Roman Catholicism.

Between Romanism and Lutheranism Schwenckfeld sought to establish the "Reformation of the Middle Way." He declares: "There are now in general two leading parties that misuse the Gospel of Christ, inasmuch as the one departs in many particulars

itualistic heretics. For a well-selected list of passages from Schwenckfeld's works concerning the undeniable ethical deficiencies of the German Reformation, see Döllinger, *Die Reformation*, I, pp. 257-280. The testimony of other writers, there given, shows by contrast Schwenckfeld's fairness and moderation. Luther himself was as severe as any of the other censors (p. 295 *sqq.*).

\* See, e.g., the *Erklärung etlicher streitiger Artikel beim Missbrauch des Evangelii*, etc., in D 375 *sqq.*, where no one of the five "abused" articles explicitly refers to the eucharist. Cf. also C, pp. 1009-1012, where in parallel columns Schwenckfeld compares and contrasts twelve cardinal articles of his faith with those of the Lutherans, only two of the points dealing directly with the Supper and a third indirectly. The high Lutheran Kurtz (*Kirchengeschichte*, 9. Aufl., 2. B., p. 150) therefore fails to do justice to Schwenckfeld when he declares: "Was Schwenckfeld an der luth. Reformation so sehr zuwider, war nichts anders als ihre feste biblisch-kirchliche Objectivität." Rather was it primarily the externalism of Luther's movement that provoked his opposition and caused his deeply spiritual nature to develop a radically different conception of Christianity. To be sure, Schwenckfeld could not grasp Luther in his entirety, nor even do justice to his doctrine of justification. On the other hand, it ought not to be forgotten that Luther's words were peculiarly liable to misinterpretation.

† B 460ab.

‡ C 645d.





to the left, and the other to the right, from the only straight and true way of the Lord. The first party is that of the papacy, that despises the Gospel of Christ with his saving ministry, and will not perceive the salutary grace of God that has been manifested nor the clearer light of revealed truth, but abides and perseveres, in doctrine and life, in its old errors.'\* "The other party consists of those whom God has in these days granted a gracious light, in which they to a certain extent perceive what is right and Christian, but who by no means live up to this light, although they wish to be regarded as evangelical; indeed, they make the Gospel minister to their pride, greed, lust, and ambition, to their crimes and misdeeds, to serve as a defense for their sinful living. These, much as they pretend to be better and more evangelical than others, are rather a dishonor, disgrace, and mocking-stock to the evangelical truth and name, while they live unevangelically, without the fear of God and without regard for man, in spite of all their praise for the Gospel."†

In many important respects, however, Schwenckfeld must be conceived not as a mediator between Romanism and Lutheranism, but as the spokesman of a more advanced reform movement. He often speaks of the Anabaptists as a third party in the Church of his day, and it cannot be doubted that there was an inner kinship between him and them. He was in unmistakable sympathy with their disciplinary zeal. He had come under the influence of their spiritualistic individualism, and heartily shared their tendency to make light of the sacraments. He early counseled the abolition of infant baptism, or at least the reduction of the sacrament to a mere "ecclesiastical baptism," to be later reinforced by the true baptism of the Spirit. During his many wanderings in southern Germany he preferred to labor in fields that had been visited by Anabaptists. So closely related, in fact, are the subjective tendencies of Schwenckfeld and these more radical leaders that he has been regarded by some as a real adherent of this party.‡

But he cannot justly be classified with the Anabaptists. He wanted toleration for them,§ but this was only in keeping with his advanced

\* D 356d.

† D 360a. Cf. also p. 710c, on the right mean between the papacy and Lutheranism, and C 655d.

‡ Keller, *e.g.*, says: "obwohl die ganze Welt wusste, dass Schwenckfeld im Grunde ein Wiedertäufer war." See *Die Reformation*, etc., p. 463.

§ A 98, and compare the Latin letter to Bucer published by Schneider, *Ueber den geschichtlichen Verlauf der Reformation in Liegnitz*, etc., Abt. I, Beilage III, p. 37.



ideas concerning the freedom of conscience in matters of religion.\* He did, to be sure, confess: "The Anabaptists are for this reason more to my liking, because they concern themselves somewhat more than many of the learned for the divine truth."† But he declares explicitly that he is no adherent of this sect,‡ and that he will never become one.§ It is a fact, moreover, that the Anabaptists themselves rejected his views and persecuted him.|| He, on the other hand, was opposed to their pitiable legalism, their ecclesiastical externalism and exclusiveness, and their lack of "spiritual knowledge."¶

Schwenckfeld commonly speaks, in the last place, of a fourth Christian Church or sect of his day, the Zwinglians. From their mediating position between the Romanists and Lutherans on the one hand and the Anabaptists on the other, one might suppose that the persecuted nobleman would have found some way of coming to terms with this party. But here too the differences concerning the eucharist were only of secondary importance.

At first, to be sure, the mediators of southern Germany, especially Bucer, Capito, and Zell of Strassburg, cordially received him.\*\* In 1524 Æcolampadius of Basel even ventured, in his contest with the Wittenbergers, to publish, without the author's consent or knowledge, a letter of Schwenckfeld's that contained some characteristic anti-Lutheran views. Zwingli afterwards did the same with Schwenckfeld's first treatise—it was a letter to some Strassburg friends—on the Lord's Supper. But however much the Silesian might have in common with the Swiss as against Luther, there was no possibility of agreeing in any positive view of the eucharist. Schwenckfeld, moreover, took as much offense at Zwingli's as at Luther's doctrine of predestination.†† In fact the antagonisms

\* See, e.g., A 78 sq., 869 sq., 874 sqq. It is in view of such strong assertions that Dr. Hartmanft, *Prospectus concerning the Corpus Schwenckfeldianorum*, 1884, speaks of Schwenckfeld as the man "who of all the leaders of the Reformation penetrated furthest into the spirit of religious liberty, who asserted its principles with unequivocal faithfulness and unflinching courage."

† C 307b.

‡ Cf. D 375, 16a, A 490a.

§ B 155c.

|| C 1012 and D 371 sqq.

¶ A 513, 801–808.

\*\* Gerbert, *Geschichte der Strassburger Sectenbewegung zur Zeit der Reformation*, 1889, is especially to be consulted on Schwenckfeld's relations to these men. See p. 135 for Capito's favorable judgment of the Silesian as late as 1534.

†† He called it a *dogma Platonicum* and a *fatum Stoicum*; D 418ab, cf. 407a, 415 sq.



here, as in the case of the Romanists, Lutherans, and Anabaptists involved the basal elements of the Christian faith.\*

In no one of the four chief branches of the divided Church, therefore, could Schwenckfeld feel at home. "Why should any one be surprised," he inquires, "if I or any other simple-minded man should now concern himself about the Christian Church and try to find where it is, inasmuch as among the four leading Churches one openly condemns the others? The papal Church condemns the Lutheran, the Lutheran condemns the Zwinglian, the Zwinglian persecutes the Anabaptists, and the Anabaptists condemn all others. But inasmuch as Christ is not divided, and his Spirit is a spirit of concord and not of dissension, he cannot, it is manifest, be ruling in all at the same time."† It would be doing Schwenckfeld a grave injustice, therefore, to attribute to him any vain desire to found a new sect.‡ He repeatedly avers that he has no pleasure in being regarded as the head of the "Schwenckfelders." It was loyalty to his convictions, as he understood the truths of revelation, that compelled him to maintain this four-cornered contest. Attacked and persecuted by all the great parties, he defended himself by means of an astonishing literary activity. Having left Silesia late in 1528 or early in 1529, in order not to be a source of trouble to his friend and patron, the Duke of Liegnitz, he spent the rest of his life in southern Germany, roaming from city to city, gathering his followers in quiet conventicles, answering the many letters of inquiry addressed to him, gaining special influence among the nobles and the lowly, and inspiring all with his own spirit of toleration, courage, and sincerity.

Such, in broad outline, is the historical situation in which Schwenckfeld developed and sought to popularize his peculiar conception of the rediscovered Gospel. Unable to identify himself with any of the leading movements of religious thought, he was nevertheless deeply influenced by them all. His spiritualistic tendencies were everywhere colored, as was inevitable, by the theological formulas of the age. His characteristic opinions are the product of his peculiar "mysticism," influenced by the types of thought in

\* Schwenckfeld seldom names Calvin, and doubtless he knew little of his distinctive doctrines. Their views in many particulars, as we shall have occasion to observe, present striking resemblances. But the presuppositions, it is needless to add, are irreconcilably different.

† A 95cd.

‡ C 571b.



the four chief branches of the Church as known to him, Romanism, Lutheranism, Zwinglianism, and Anabaptism.

It is our purpose, therefore, to examine his views from the precise angle from which this historical situation constantly compelled him to set them forth, from the standpoint of the eucharistic controversy.

It will be most advantageous to begin with Schwenckfeld's conception of the sacraments in general. This will introduce us to the presuppositions of his whole system of thought, and enable us to estimate aright his positive contribution to the many-sided discussion of the Supper.

Our author's language concerning the nature of the sacraments is not devoid of that carelessness as to terminology which renders so many of his statements difficult of interpretation. At first sight, indeed, it might appear that, at least so far as "the means of grace" are concerned, there is little room for doubt as to his precise meaning. The many misrepresentations of his views, however, clearly prove that the matter is not so simple as a casual reading might lead one to suppose. Occasional utterances, taken apart from their context, have been made to support the extreme assertion that he deprived the sacraments of all objective content, efficacy, and worth whatsoever. On the other hand, there are statements which would not be out of place in any fair exposition of the Reformed or even the Lutheran doctrine of the means of grace. Manifestly we must, if possible, find a logical mean between such apparently contradictory views.

In the first place, therefore, full justice must be done to Schwenckfeld's unequivocal opposition to the term *Gnadenmittel*. Only a few of the numberless passages can be cited. "In fine, the doctrine of means is an old sophistical doctrine, by which the hearts are turned away from Christ in heaven down toward the creatures,\* in order there to find grace."† "We on the contrary affirm that all who seek salvation through creaturely means or external things, no matter what they may be called, and not exclusively through the sole mediator, the man Jesus Christ, are false teachers and lead away from Christ, who is the only way, the door, means and mediator, through whom we draw nigh unto God."‡ "Christ will give us himself through the Holy Spirit, not through bodily means or

\* For Schwenckfeld's peculiar idea of creaturehood, see pp. 36 *seq.*

† C 486d, 487.

‡ C 507c.





men, but through himself, in order that we by daily eating in faith his flesh and blood may have fellowship with him and become partakers of his nature and essence."\* "God must himself, apart from all external means, through Christ move the soul, speak to it, work in it, if we are to have any experience of salvation and eternal life."† "Just as the Head is the Saviour of the whole body, so he [i.e., any reader of Ephesians 5] will soon find that here no bodily, external means or instrument can intervene as little as between the vine and its branches."‡ Again, we are told "that the Eternal and Almighty God, whom nothing can resist, does not work through means or instruments like a cobbler or tailor, but he acts freely and effects our salvation through himself, in Christ his Son, although he also uses the service of the creatures to the praise of his grace and for the good of man; but he is not bound thereto."§

Schwenckfeld's application of these basal principles to the sacrament of the Supper resulted, as is well known, in his dispensing altogether with the observance of this ordinance. The fierce disputes about the eucharist that prevailed even among the seven factions of the Lutherans themselves,|| and in general the attention, one-sided and excessive as he thought, that was paid to external rites, led the reformer to counsel his followers to abstain, for the time being, from all participation in this act of worship.¶

Schwenckfeld's depreciatory views and practice concerning the Supper have their close parallel, as might be expected, in his teachings concerning baptism. We have already seen that in common with the Swiss radicals he rejected the baptism of children.\*\* But even in the case of adults there may be no necessity, either of means or of precept, for this sacrament. It all depends, as we shall find, upon the far-reaching distinction between the "inner" and the "outer" transaction, between the "baptism by the Spirit" and the "baptism by water." Whether Schwenckfeld's view of this

\* A 868d.

† A 768b.

‡ A 866c.

§ A 424c; cf. C 86b, 482c, 486d, 507c, 532b, 997b, 1005b.

|| C 259d.

¶ For his self-justification in this so-called *Stillstand*, see such passages as A 736 sq., 761, B 225c, C 274b, 640d, 895a, 983a.

\*\* C 288-293 gives thirty reasons against pedobaptism. But this issue was not a burning one for him. He declares: "Mir ist auch für meine Person gar Nichts am Kindertauf gelegen; man taufe oder taufe nicht, so lass ich's dabei bleiben, wollte lieber dass dieser Artikel noch zur Zeit geschwiegen würde" (C 286d).



rite is a "high" or a "low" one will depend, manifestly, upon which of the two aspects of the sacrament he has in mind.\* For the present it may suffice to say that the above statements about the utter uselessness of external means of grace, in the ordinary sense of the term, apply as much to the one sacrament as to the other.

Again, Schwenckfeld's theory of the Church is likewise influenced by this fundamental dualism between the inner realities of religion and their external signs. It cannot be denied that he lacked all interest in ecclesiastical organizations. The fact that he was the real founder of conventicles among the dissenters of the German Reformation is no refutation of this assertion. His followers have, moreover, maintained their independent existence to this day. But these facts cannot be traced to any teaching of his as to the need or utility of a corporate church life. On the contrary, as Gerbert remarks: "Schwenckfeld lacked every tendency toward ecclesiasticism; in fact, he entered into a decided opposition to the Protestantism that was shaping itself into Churches."<sup>†</sup> His spiritualism shared in this respect the defects of all genuine mysticism: the benefits of communal life for the individual are not duly appreciated. With no talent for administration and no desire for the separate organization of his adherents, he was content, for the sake of the peace of Christendom, to work quietly on a small scale, and to trust to the power of his teachings for the defeat of his better marshaled foes. With his opposition to all external ecclesiasticism, he was only partially successful in realizing the importance of the Church as a factor in the salvation of the world.<sup>‡</sup>

But we must go even farther. The Scriptures themselves seem to be endangered. The Pauline antithesis between the letter and the spirit is applied in a manner which at least gives color to the charge that Schwenckfeld rejected the normative authority of the

\* It may here by way of anticipation be admitted, therefore, that Schwenckfeld in his use of the term "sacrament" often employs an undistributed middle. He professes to adopt Augustin's definition (*In Joann.*, 80 : 3)—"*accedit verbum ad elementum et fit sacramentum etiam ipsum tanquam verbum visibile*"—but ere long either the *elementum* or the *verbum* is spiritualized: the former becomes the Holy Ghost or the latter the Eternal Word.

<sup>†</sup> *L.c.*, p. 135; cf. p. 170.

<sup>‡</sup> Meanwhile, however, his admitted partial success may serve to remind us that his subjectivism was not of that extreme kind that cut itself loose absolutely from the historic past. Here too, in other words, we may expect to find a more satisfactory aspect of his doctrine of the Church than that commonly ascribed to him and necessitated, it would seem, by some of his own statements.



Bible. Certainly, if only his most radical assertions were considered, there would be little to differentiate him from the most fanatical of the extremists. There is no end to the criticism of the *Buchstäbler* who, in mastering only the letter of Scripture, fail to discern its real, spiritual content. *Schriftgelehrte* and *Gottesgelehrte* are generally separated by precisely the whole diameter in a given sphere of speculation. In endless variety through all his numerous works runs this polemic against the alleged deification of the letter of Scripture by all four of the great Church parties. The external word is not the real Word. The preached Gospel is not the true Evangel, the genuine Mysterium. The Scriptures are not to be identified out of hand with the Word of God.\*

It is plain that we have here fallen upon a fundamental line of thought whose ramifications we may expect to encounter at every step of our progress. We have in fact begun to lay bare the very heart of Schwenckfeld's gospel. As in many another theological system, so also in his, the Word and sacraments are indissolubly linked together. To ascertain the true nature of his theory of the sacraments, therefore, we are bound to examine his views concerning the Word of God. But the identification of the Word with the Son at once raises the larger question, What did he think of Christ?

Schwenckfeld reveals himself as a genuine disciple of the Reformation by his clear grasp of the central importance in Christianity of the Redeemer's person and work.† As some of the passages already cited will have made clear, Christ is regarded as the only possible mediator between man and God.‡ No saints can share

\* The passages on these points are literally innumerable. They disprove the thesis of Looß (*Dogmengeschichte*<sup>3</sup>, p. 373) about the "damals nirgends angefochtene Gleichsetzung von hl. Schrift und Wort Gottes." Cf. Harnack, *Dogmeng.*, III<sup>3</sup>, p. 791.

† There was, to be sure, a latent tendency to make more of the "person" than of the "work," that is, to permit the objective atonement of the historic Jesus unduly to recede from view behind the incarnation considered as the great redemptive fact. This was, moreover, a logical necessity in his system. At the same time it must be said that the tendency was in part overcome by the reformer's conscientious study of the Biblical basis of justification by faith. It is an inaccurate representation of the case, therefore, when Hodge declares (*Systematic Theology*, I, p. 83): "He said that we are justified not by what Christ has done for us, but by what He has done within us." How much is made of the Saviour's mission in his estate of humiliation will be shown later. Meanwhile it is to be conceded that the essence of Schwenckfeld's Christianity is to be found in his altogether unique doctrine of the deification of Christ's flesh. What this principle logically implied is one thing; what modification he gave it in practice is quite another.

‡ See also A 47ab, 547b, 583 *sq.*, 767.



this relationship with him.\* In the biblical phrase "through Christ" the very preposition promotes his jealous regard for the honor of the Son as an absolutely divine Saviour.† No theologian, in fact, has ever more strongly recognized both the supernatural and the Christocentric character of Christianity.‡ Hence the numberless reminders that to know Christ aright is life's chief duty.§ The whole Gospel is conceived as a fourfold revelation of the promises and prophecies concerning Christ, of their actual fulfillment, of his glorification, and of our participation in him.|| Firmly and squarely, therefore, Schwenckfeld took his stand upon the ultimate and comprehensive basis of the Reformation, the principle that salvation flows not from man but from God through Christ. What then constitutes the essential difference between him and his diverse antagonists? The answer is found in his characteristic doctrine of the spiritualistic mediatorship of Christ, which affected the whole range of his thought and fixed a gulf between him and his opponents on all questions pertaining to the Scriptures, the Church and the Sacraments. We therefore proceed, in the light of this central fact, to take a second survey of these related subjects, reproducing as faithfully as possible the polemic bearings of his system.

First in the order of thought, as also in the order of importance, is the antinomy between the Scriptures and the Word of God. And on this, as on most of the other issues, the chief opposition was directed against the party from whom he had learned most, the Lutherans.

Luther had rediscovered the Christian religion by rediscovering the central truth of the Gospel, the revelation of God's grace in Jesus Christ. Deeply influenced by the German mystics—they were, of course, the legitimate representatives of vital piety in those days, in opposition to that official system of scholastic theology, mediæval asceticism and sensuous ecclesiasticism that had all but converted religion into a flat moralism—he none the less was saved from all ecstatic excesses by the safeguards of a profoundly ethical spirit that never failed to ground the assurance of

\* D 102, 290.

† D 292, cf. 339b.

‡ See e.g., A 327 sq., 725c, D 287, 595, 647, 655, 698.

§ A 230, 631, 641 sq., 664, 907 sqq. See the treatise (D 77-91), *Ermahnung zur wahren und seligmachenden Erkenntnis Christi*.

|| A 860-865.





its pardon, the joy of its salvation, upon the objectively revealed truth of God, and therefore upon the historic work of Christ. His pearl of greatest price was his faith, the assurance, based upon the Scriptures, that he by the merit of Christ was standing in the favor of God. But in the light of his personal experience, and especially under pressure from the Romanists, his enemies on the right wing, Luther was now led to criticise and indeed to subvert the traditional theory of the magical *ex opere operato* efficacy of the sacraments. In fact the very existence of these rites, regarded in any proper sense of the term as means of grace, was endangered. Reduced in number from seven to two (or three),\* they furthermore became mere external signs of the one true sacrament, the Word.† Gauged by his principle, "faith constitutes the power of the sacrament," their value is seen to be reduced practically to nothing.‡

But Luther in those first days of heroic defense and aggression went much farther. It is well known with what boldness and scorn of logical consequences he could apply the criterion of his own religious experience to the books of the New Testament, namely, whether or not they made Christ their chief concern.§ He did not hesitate, therefore, to lay threatening hands upon the letter of Scripture, whenever it seemed impossible to bring the text into harmony with the facts of his own religious life. The very term "Word of God" had not from the first that fixed content and value which it later acquired. He had freely employed the Augustinian distinction between the "inner" and the "outer" Word.||

\* See the treatise, *De Captivitate Babylonica*, which is not only epoch-making in the history of the sacraments in general, but also fundamental to Luther's development of the doctrine of the Supper in particular.

† Cf. Thimme, *Entwicklung und Bedeutung der Sakramentslehre Luthers*, in the *Neue Kirchliche Zeitschrift*, 1901, p. 754. On the general subject of Luther's doctrine of the sacraments consult also Kahnis, *Die Lehre vom Abendmahl*, Göbel, in *Theologische Studien und Kritiken*, 1843, 2. H., pp. 333 *sqq.*, and the histories of doctrine, especially Seeberg.

‡ Cf. his *Unterricht an die Beichtkinder* (anno 1521): "Das göttliche Wort, in der Bulle verdammt, ist mehr denn alle Dinge, welches die Seele nicht mag entbehren, mag aber wohl des Sacraments entbehren; so wird dich der rechte Bischof Christus selber speisen, geistlich, mit demselben Sacrament. Lass dir nicht seltsam sein, ob du dasselbe Jahr nicht zum Sacrament gehest" (St. Louis Ed., Vol. XIX, col. 812).

§ Literally "drive Christ" ("Christum treiben"); Preface to the *Ep. of James*.

|| It ought at once to be added, however, that Luther soon succeeded in establishing a definite and fixed relation between the two: the former is, to all intents and purposes, bound to the latter.



It is idle to speculate as to what he might have done with this formula had it not, in the hands of the fanatics, imperiled his whole achievement. The fact remains, however, that not only in his critical remarks on the New Testament books, but in many an occasional utterance as well, he countenanced the separation, so dear to the mystic's heart, between the Scriptures and the Word of God, between the "outer" and the "inner" Word.\*

It was with such aspects of Luther's original teachings that Schwenckfeld was in perfect accord.† In this sense he interpreted the immediate past. "Thus our *doctores* in the beginning taught the true view of the Word of God and his divine ordinance, and built upon the one solid foundation, namely, upon the eternal living Word Christ which is with the Father. They accordingly taught that faith and eternal salvation are not bound to any external word or work nor given through any external means, but, as God's work, gift, and pure grace, they come without means from God and the Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ, who as the head flows into them as the members of his body."‡ And for this very reason Schwenckfeld frequently expresses his disapproval of the reactionary tendency that took hold of Luther about the year 1522. "Thereafter, however, when they began to quarrel so much and give their carnal desires so much scope in the things of God; after the controversy on the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ had arisen, . . . they inverted the true order in the work of God, in the spread of his Word, and in man's justification, and in this and many other respects they held and taught views contrary to their former doctrine and books, so palpably indeed that one could fairly lay hands on the discrepancy."§

That Luther's view of the Word and sacraments did in fact suffer a retrogressive transformation cannot be denied.|| We

\* Cf. Schenkel, *Das Wesen des Protestantismus*, I, 130; Harnack, *Dogmeng.*, III<sup>2</sup>, 771 sq.; Loofs, *Dogmeng.*, p. 373.

† It would be instructive to carry out in detail the resemblances—often enough, of course, they are merely verbal and superficial—between Schwenckfeld and Luther before the outbreak of the Wittenberg disturbances. Cf. Hase (*Kirchengeschichte*, III, 1, p. 300): "Er hielt eine Richtung fest, das innere Geisteschristenthum, die fruher auch in Luther eine Macht war."

‡ C 339cd.

§ *L.c.*, p. 340e.

|| Thimme, *l.c.*, p. 876, is inclined to think that the differences between the earlier and the later Luther on the subject of the sacraments have been unduly emphasized as against the confessedly common and permanent elements. After



cannot go into the details of this reaction. Only a few of the more striking passages may be cited in order that we may the better understand Schwenckfeld's polemic.\* "God deals with us in two ways: externally through the oral word and through bodily signs (baptism and the eucharist). Inwardly he deals with us through the Holy Spirit and faith together with other gifts; but always in due order and measure, so that the external things shall and must precede, and the internal things come after and through the external ones; in such wise, that he has determined to give the internal things to no one save through the external things; for he will give no one the Spirit or faith without the external word and sign which he has appointed for that purpose."† Very characteristic is his assertion: "God lets the Word of the Gospel go forth and the seed fall into the hearts of men. Where the seed is lodged in the heart, there is the Holy Spirit to regenerate; there is produced another man, other thoughts, other words and works."‡ How much importance is at times attached to the *verbum vocale* may be seen in the following statement: "The fingers which baptized me are not the fingers of a man but of the Holy Spirit, and the mouth and word of the preacher which I heard are not his but the word and sermon of the Holy Spirit."§

But it is needless to multiply the evidences: in the genuinely

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all, it is a question of having an adequate standard of measurement. To a man of Schwenckfeld's type the differences, even as Thimme represents them, would necessarily appear to constitute a lamentable relapse toward Rome. That Reformed theologians will in this matter agree with Harnack's severe criticism of Luther goes without saying. Harnack, *Dogmeng.*, III<sup>3</sup>, 792 sqq.

\* Otto, *Die Anschauungen vom heiligen Geiste bei Luther* (Göttingen, 1898), has an excellent section on the relation of the Word and Spirit in Luther.

† *Luthers Werke*, St. Louis Ed., XX, col. 202. The Augsburg Confession gave classical expression to this view (Schaff, *Creeds*, III, p. 10): "Nam per Verbum et Sacramenta, tanquam per instrumenta, donatur Spiritus Sanctus, qui fidem efficit, ubi et quando visum est Deo, in iis, qui audiunt Evangelium." Luther himself in the *Schmalcald Articles* maintained (Hase, *Libri Symbolici*, P. Secunda, Artt. Smalc., VIII, 3): "Et in iis, quæ vocale et externum verbum concernunt, constanter tenendum est, Deum nemini Spiritum vel gratiam suam largiri, nisi, per verbum et cum verbo externo et præcedente, ut ita præmuniamus nos adversus Enthusiastas, id est, spiritus, qui jactitant, se ante verbum et sine verbo spiritum habere, et adeo Scripturam sive vocale verbum judicant, flectunt et reflectunt pro libito." He went so far as to say (*ibid.*, VIII, 9): "Et nullus Propheta, sive Elias sive Elisæus, Spiritum sine decalogo sive verbo vocali accepit."

‡ St. Louis Ed., IX, col. 1163.

§ This and many other equally remarkable passages may be found in Otto, *l.c.*



Lutheran conception the Spirit is bound to the Word and the sacraments, and these contain in themselves the supernatural grace which produces saving effects in the believing heart.\* More and more the visible sign had been magnified until, in alleged conformity with the commandment of God, the external sacrament is identified as a *verbum visibile* with the Word, and this in turn is made the real manifestation of God's grace.

Against this conception of Christianity, in which he rightly divined a retrogression toward Rome, Schwenckfeld opposed first of all a generically different theory of the Word. The distinction between the "inner" and the "outer" Word assumes a basal importance. The following passage contains the heart of the matter: "The Word, therefore, when the servants of the Spirit preach or teach, is of two kinds, but with a marked difference in the transactions: one which is of God and itself God, which also richly lives and works in the servant's heart; that is the inner Word, and is in reality nothing other than Christ in the Holy Spirit. It is inwardly revealed and heard by the new man with the believing ears of the heart. The other, which serves this inner Word with voice, sound and expression, is called the oral or external Word, and this is heard with carnal ears, even those of the natural man, and is written and read in letters. But he who has read or heard only that and not also the inner Word has not heard the Gospel of Christ, the Gospel of grace, nor has he received or understood it."† Corresponding, then, to the inner and the outer Word are two kinds of hearing, two kinds of faith, two kinds of knowledge of Christ, two kinds of biblical exegesis: that of the letter and that of the Spirit. The prime requisite is a spiritual apprehension of the Gospel, *i.e.*, of Christ the Word.

But of what account, then, are the Scriptures? That they are in no case to be regarded as "means of grace," in the ordinary sense of the term, we have already seen. But Schwenckfeld's repugnance to the term *Gnadenmittel* must not mislead us into supposing that he took the position of the extreme radicals on this question.

\* The adjective "believing" is of course all-important in the Lutheran statement. Schwenckfeld indulged in much unwarranted criticism of his opponents because of his misapprehension of the nature of their "faith."

† A 767ab; see the whole letter, pp. 764-780. Cf. D 241, 330, 361, 563, 630bc, 887a, and the tract *Vom Unterschiede des Worts des Geistes und Buchstabens*. This dualism concerning the Word colors the whole work of Schwenckfeld. It is based, as we shall find, upon a philosophic dualism between God and the creature world.





We must do justice, in turn, to what we may regard as the higher elements of his view.

The Bible, it is clearly recognized, comes from God.\* It is inspired by the Holy Spirit.† In numberless passages Schwenckfeld seeks to clear himself from the charge that he is a despiser of the sacred oracles. He repudiates the calumny of his enemy Flacius Illyricus, who charged him with teaching that "faith is not according to the Holy Scripture, but the Holy Scripture must be directly conformed to faith."‡ The Scriptures should be faithfully read and diligently preached.§ Catechetical instruction in them ought to be revived.|| Picture books dealing with biblical events ought to be printed for the special benefit of children.¶

But still weightier considerations must be brought forward. Schwenckfeld unequivocally asserts the normative and binding authority of the Scriptures. To be sure the contrary, as has been noted, seems at times to be the case. None the less the Bible was his last court of appeal. On all the controverted points of the age he went directly to the Scriptures.\*\* With him as with his opponents the final question was simply the exegetical one.†† He never presumes to place his Christian consciousness in a position of higher authority than that of the written Word.‡‡ He ex-

\* A 441, D 545a.

† D 868b.

‡ C 464b; cf. D 545, 868.

§ C 486: "Und am ersten dass Philippi [Melanchthons] Beschuldigung nicht wahr ist, dass ich das Hören, Lesen, Betrachten des geschriebenen oder mündlichen Evangelii verwerfe oder sage, dass Gott nicht dabei (wenn's im Glauben geschieht) mit Gnaden wirke." The following is decisive on the question of preaching the Word (B 162c): "Der Predigt halben wünscht er, dass nicht allein in den Kirchen, sondern auch in Häusern, auf den Märkten und Dächern, zu Wasser und Land, der Name Jesu Christi recht bekannt werde, ja dass in der ganzen Welt das Evangelium Jesu Christi und der Reichtum seiner Gnaden verkündigt, ausgebreitet, und gepredigt werde."

|| B 368d, 373d.

¶ B 380; see also the whole tract, *Ein kurzer Bericht von der Weise des Catechismi*, by Val. Krautwald.

\*\* Cf. A 28d: "Also muss man auch bald wenn einem ein streitiger Punkt wird vorgeworfen, zur Bibel laufen, das Vorderste und das Hinterste (und nicht allein den blossen Spruch) dabei wohl besichtigen, bedenken, und ansehen, so wird man es oft viel anders finden als es sich mancher lässt einbilden." Cf. C 77d.

†† His works abound in expositions of biblical passages. His exegesis is, to be sure, influenced by the allegorical tendencies of the time, but it fairly attains the average level of sobriety and moderation. And however difficult it may be for us to harmonize some of his extreme utterances as to the inner and outer Word, the fact must never be lost sight of that after all he gets his "theology" from the same book as his opponents.

‡‡ It is manifestly a perversion when Kurtz (*Kirchengeschichte*, 9. Aufl., II, p. 150) declares "he elevated over the external Word of God in the Scriptures the inner Word of the Spirit of God in man."



pressly denies that he wished to have Scripture conformed to his faith, rather than have his faith conformed to the Scriptures. To be sure he often speaks slightly of the humanistic culture of his day. But the secret of his attitude toward the Bible is to be found in his conviction that the book was being radically misunderstood by his opponents because of their lack of true faith. *Philosophia, Frau Hulda, Vernunft, Dialectica, Rhetorica, and Grammatica* were wresting the Scriptures to the Church's destruction.\* The prime requisite, therefore, is to be taught of God.† To this end the Spirit must illuminate and sanctify the reader's mind. For the oral Word is not enough.‡ Preaching may reach the ear without touching the heart.§ The external Word is not a mediator of salvation,|| but when rightly, *i.e.*, spiritually understood, it is a source of the real knowledge of Christ, which is the one thing needful. One passage may serve to give the contents of many: "Accordingly the Gospel of Christ is also spoken of, preached, written, and understood in such a double manner (although before God there is only one Gospel, just as there is only one Christ), namely, according to the letter and according to the Spirit. At one time the Scripture speaks of the Gospel according to the external service; at another, according to the inner mystery and divine essence; or according to history and according to the power of God. The Gospel according to history, or according to the [external] service, and outside of us, is the discourse or outward sermon concerning Christ, given or heard by the servant or preacher, without the coöperation of the Holy Spirit, only in the letter, and grasped by human reason and with practice and diligence fastened in the memory, without any renewing or fructifying of the heart. This is not as yet the true Gospel, indeed scarcely a picture, copy, shadow, or evidence of the true living Gospel of

\* Of the many passages dealing with his distrust of reason, see *e.g.*, A 234cd, 257, 43S, 515, 828, B 294, 446, C 117, 252, 728, C 1016, D 159, 874.

† See the treatise, *Vom Unterschied der Schriftgelehrten und Gottesgelehrten; was auch Schriftgelehrte und Gottesgelehrte heissen*. Schenkel, *Das Wesen*, etc., III, 98, not inaptly declares: "Gelehrte und Verkehrte sind ihm sinnverwandt."

‡ B 349c, C 235b, 535c.

§ C 487 sq. shows how Luther himself had admitted this, but later with his adherents had relapsed from this position.

|| A 765. This however does not mean, as Dr. Hodge (*Syst. Theology*, I, 82) interprets Schwenckfeld's view of the Bible, that "the Scriptures are not, even instrumentally, the source of the divine life." Logically indeed Schwenckfeld was bound to come to this conclusion. But it was characteristic of him to shrink from the extremes to which the strict logic of his system would have driven him. The ordinary doctrinal phrases can never with justice be applied to him. His thought is cast in a different mould.



Christ, no matter how skillful, learned, and eloquent the preacher may be. Therefore the Gospel of Christ, to speak strictly, is nothing other than the joyful, comforting good news of redemption and eternal salvation, which the angel of the great council, Jesus Christ, brings through the Holy Spirit to an afflicted heart, which he first punishes for sin, and calls to repentance, and to which he then proclaims the divine peace purchased by his blood," etc.\*

But of course the decisive question is not whether the "external Word" needs the accompaniment of the "inner Word" or not, but rather whether or not the latter may dispense with the former. Schwenckfeld's opponents, it is plain from his defensive attitude, accused him of rejecting the Scriptures. But it is equally clear that his assertion of the need of a spiritual understanding of the Word neither exhausts the *à priori* possibilities of the case nor constitutes a complete statement of the actual facts. The specific question must be answered, Is there any spiritual knowledge possible apart from the written Word?

The resemblance in this particular between Schwenckfeld and the Quakers is too obvious not to have been a subject for frequent comment. Barclay,† indeed, maintains that the teaching of Schwenckfeld and Fox was identical on three important points: first as to the "Inward Light, Life and Word"; secondly as to "Immediate Revelation"; and lastly as to the inability of any external bodily act to convey a spiritual reality to the soul. But neither is there any historical connection traceable between Schwenckfeld and the Friends, nor can there be said to be anything more than a general correspondence and similarity between their ideas; both represent more or less extreme reactions against ecclesiasticism, sacerdotalism, and sacramentarianism. As against the orthodox Quakers, Schwenckfeld taught a peculiar Christology which gives his whole system a different complexion; and as against the heterodox Quakers he held a far more moderate position concerning the nature, purpose and extent of the Inner Light. Now and then, indeed, he uses the language of the most radical spiritualists. Especially does this seem to be the case when statements are divorced from their contexts. The following is a characteristic negation: "It is here evident, therefore, that the true saving knowledge of God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ comes from no other source than a gracious divine revelation. . . . That is, that the Son of God, Christ, can be rightly

\* D 331b. Cf. A 687-689.

† *The Inner Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth*, p. 237 sqq.



known neither through human reason, nor through Scripture, nor out of any external thing."\* It is well known, moreover, how strenuously he insisted that his unique interpretation of the words "this is my body" was due to special revelation.† This was one of the specific charges brought against him by Capito and Blaurer during his sojourn in southern Germany.‡ But what after all is his doctrine of "revelation"? The context of the passage last quoted is too important to leave unnoticed: "That is, that the Son of God, Christ, can be rightly known neither through human reason, nor through Scripture, nor out of any external thing, although the Holy Scriptures and the created things bear witness to him."§ In fact the "light" so highly prized is naught but what the Apostle Paul prays may be given his Ephesian readers, "the spirit of wisdom and revelation" in the knowledge of Christ.|| "That is what the Lord Christ means by hearing and learning the Word of the Father and coming to Christ, and as he says, 'they shall all be taught of God.' This some incorrectly refer to the Scriptures; they dislike also the word revelation, regarding it indeed as a dream, a fancy, a fanatical excess, although in very truth it is the living doctrine of God from His Spirit in the believing heart."¶ The revelation of spiritual truth, therefore, comes not from the natural man's interpretation of the Scriptures but only from the real Word Christ himself, through his Spirit operating now with and now without the letter of the Scriptures or any external thing. Thus was left open, to be sure, a way of retreating, if need were, to the extremes of mere subjectivism. But the practical issues of the day made him retain a strong hold upon the sacred text: the spiritual as distinguished from the literal interpretation of the Scriptures is the heart and core of his doctrine concerning "revelations" to the individual Christian. He was opposed to Luther's idea that the Spirit never operates savingly except through the Word, and that the *verbum* itself is *illustrans*, i.e., that the Scriptures contain within themselves a supernatural and divine power, so that their efficacy is independent of the special accompaniment of the Spirit.\*\* But that he did not quite reproduce the

\* A 427d.

† More generally the term used is "Offenbarung"; but occasionally we find "gnädige Heimsuehing."

‡ See Heyd's article, "Blaurer, Schnepf, Schwenckfeld," in the *Tübinger Zeitschrift für Theologie*, 1838, H. 4, pp. 29, 35.

§ A 427d.

|| A 428a.

¶ A 428a.

\*\* Hering, *Die Mystik Luthers*, p. 45, correctly expresses Luther's view as follows: "Das Grundthema seiner Schriftauslegung: das Wort ist Geist, ist von dem Zusatz begleitet zu denken, dass Geist im Wort ist."





views of the great body of Christians of all ages, but allowed himself to reveal a bias, logically indeed not without warrant in the position of his chief opponents, yet practically objectionable, against the letter of Scripture, is due not only to the polemic interest that dominated his work but also and primarily to the necessities of his system of thought. Wherever the practical problems of his situation claim his chief attention, however, the decisive authority of the Bible is freely conceded. "Thus do we conclude our admonition concerning the true and spiritual knowledge of Christ, which also is the sole criterion (*basis et norma*) by which to know and judge all manner of doctrines, opinions, errors and sects. Nor do we know any better or more convenient way for the promotion, reformation or improvement of the Christian religion and doctrine than the true knowledge of Christ, which must be secured, not only out of Scripture but rather out of the gracious gift of the Father's revelation, *yet in such wise that it will always agree or harmonize with the testimony of Scripture.*"\* The Spirit therefore works when and where and how he pleases. But the Scriptures are his product, and therefore furnish a faithful criterion for ascertaining and estimating all his revealing activities. When rightly used they simply point to Christ.† They recede in importance behind the manifestations of the subjective religious life produced by the immediate operation of the Spirit upon the heart. But Schwenckfeld, in spite of his strong dislike of the term *Gnadenmittel*, still concedes the serviceableness of the Scriptures in pointing the enlightened reader to the real Word of God, the Son himself. The blessings of the Gospel are communicated by the Spirit operating without means upon the heart: the Scriptures are no mediators of salvation. But none the less, when rightly interpreted, the inspired documents fulfill to all intents and purposes the function of means of grace in any but the strictly Lutheran acceptance of the term. "For although God the Almighty himself teaches his disciples inwardly through Christ in the Holy Spirit the pure divine truth, he has nevertheless appointed for them external teachers and learning also, such as servants of the Word of God, preachers, teachers, expositors of the Holy Scriptures, etc., whom God the Lord calls, sends, and through his Spirit urges to promote his divine doings among his people, whose service he also

\* "Doch so dass es alle Wege mit der Schrift Zeugnis stimme oder übereintrage" (D 62b).

† D 86Scd (in margin): "Die heilige Schrift weiset von sich und über sich zum Arzt Christo, der allein Gesundheit und Leben giebt." "Die H. Schrift zeugt vom Arzte und der Kraft seiner Arznei, sie ists aber nicht selbst." Cf. C 1010.



blesse, in order that it may serve in the grace of God for the edification of Christians in Christ and their soul's salvation."\*

The same unstable equilibrium is to be seen in Schwenckfeld's attitude toward the Church as an institution for the furtherance of the religious life. We have seen how little regard or capacity he had for organization, how his strongly anti-ecclesiastical spirit voiced itself in declarations which, followed to their logical conclusion, would leave no place whatever for the external Church. Against this very charge of abolishing the ministerial office and the public worship of the sanctuary he had frequently to defend himself.† It is plain, however, that the criticism is only to a certain extent justifiable. He himself sets forth his position as follows: "I object to no one's hearing sermons as opportunity offers; nor do I (as the Baptists do) bind the conscience in this matter as if it were sin; nor do I advise the endurance of exile. I therefore in these days of dispersion let every one abide in his freedom."‡ Here, as in the doctrine of the Word, Schwenckfeld distinguished between the internal and the external Church.§ The latter, the true Church of God, is made up of the company of the real believers. Their head is Christ. He rules and builds them up.|| Their salvation is not bound to any external means or institution as an indispensable condition for its bestowal.¶ But on the other hand there are not wanting indications that Schwenckfeld was unwilling to go the whole length of the Anabaptist idealization of the historic Church. Even liturgical ceremonies have a helpful mission, pro-

\* D 893d.

† Melancthon, under date of October 18, 1535, wrote as follows to Frecht: "De Schwenckfeldio et Franco, Chronicorum scriptore, placet mihi iudicium tuum. Nam et ego utrumque severe coerendum esse iudico, etsi Schwenckfeldium stultum magis quam improbum esse arbitror; sed tamen hypocrisis apud vulgus nocet et habet hoc [hic], ut ex Ecolampadio audire memini, nullam ecclesiæ formam, hoc est, nulla ministeria probat . . . Ego vero omnes, qui in nostris ecclesiis de ministeriis publicis parum honorifice sentiunt dignos odio esse censeo" (*Corpus Ref.*, ed. Bretschneider, II, col. 955).

‡ C 894c.

§ "Nun ist das Wörtlein Kirche *equivocum*, das ist, dass man von der Kirche so wohl als vom Glauben oder Gläubigen auf zweierlei Weise pflegt zu reden: einmal nach dem Grunde der Wahrheit wie es vor Gott damit steht, wie die Kirche aus Christo in seinem Reiche wird erbaut und vereinigt, wie er sie regiert und erhält im Reiche der Gnaden . . . Zum andern mal redet man von der Kirche Christi nach ihrer Versammlung im Dienste der Apostel und anderer Diener des heiligen Geistes welche von Christo dem Himmelkönig, seinem Volke zu dienen, und in der Erbauung seines Leibes Handreichung zu thun bestellt werden." B 654bd; cf. D 10-15, *Von der christlichen Kirche*.

|| A 870b, 97a.

¶ It is interesting to note that Schwenckfeld taught that there were undoubtedly Christians even among the Turks of that day. A 782 sq.



vided only that no trust be placed in them.\* Preaching is therefore of cardinal importance, even if it is not to be identified with the power of Christ, but only to be regarded as pointing toward him and thereby serving him.† Even pictures, if not worshipped, may be used with advantage.‡

It must, of course, be admitted that Schwenckfeld had not a sufficiently clear and consistent view as to the need of ecclesiastical organization. He could, in perfect harmony with his rigoristic and puritanic requirements, have insisted upon a fair degree of organization under leaders of his own choosing. Few, however, will fail to approve his views so far as their criticism of the historical situation is concerned.§ He could not, with his rich spiritual experience, rest content with a Cæsaro-papal ecclesiasticism which seemed to endanger the whole Protestant cause, which in large measure destroyed the new-born spirit of religious freedom by permitting the use of the sword even in matters of such subordinate importance as the observance of ceremonial rites.|| He left the existing Churches not from choice but from necessity: they did not in any satisfactory measure embody his ideals. But to organize his followers according to his own principles he had neither the wish nor the ability. And thus his theory of the Church reached no advanced stage of development. His views oscillated between an apparently absolute denial of the need and advantage of an external institution and the generous recognition of the mission of the *de*

\* A 846e: "Also möchte ich auch von Ceremonien sagen welche äusserlicher Gottesdienst oder Kirchenübungen heissen, deren viel nur wohl und nützlich mögen gebraucht werden. Ich achte es auch nicht dafür, dass irgend ein Christ so vermessen sein kann, dass er alle Ceremonien (ob man wohl kein Vertrauen drein setzen noch die Seligkeit drin soll suchen) ohne Unterschied wolle verwerfen. Sonst würde er das Predigtamt, und was in der Kirche äusserlich gehandelt wird, auch müssen verwerfen." Cf. A 700a, 791b.

† C 997bc.

‡ A 846a.

§ See the impartial judgment of Erbkam, *Geschichte der prot. Sekten*, p. 435 sq.

|| B 655d: "Deshalb denn die Definition und Beschreibung der Kirehen, wie sie in der Confession [sc. Augustana] gestellt . . . billig sollte gebessert werden; damit wir Gott den Herrn und seine Werke nicht abermals an uns unnütze Knechte noch an den Papst und Bischof aufs Neue zwingen, heften oder anbinden, sondern den Gang der Gnaden Christi und seines Geistes Lehramt, der die Herzen lehret und geistet wo er will, desgleichen die Erbauung des Leibes Christi überall frei im Geiste und unangebunden stehen lassen. Wie den auch die hl. Christliche Kirehe nicht als eine andere Polizei an dies oder jenes Land eingezäunt, weder an Rom, Wittenberg, Zürich, Genf, Mähren, noch anderswo, weder an Zeit, Personen, noch an etwas Äusserliches, ja weder an Prediger, Predigt, oder Sacrament gebunden, sondern mit ihren Gliedern allenthalben durch die ganze Welt, wo glaubige Christen sind, ist ausgebreitet." On the functions of magistrates concerning the Church, see A 79 sqq., 401 sqq., *et passim*. Cf. also Schenkel, *Das Wesen des Prot.*, III, 382-386.



*facto* organizations, provided only they inculcated a spiritual knowledge of the Head of the Church.\*

This survey of Schwenckfeld's doctrine of the Word and the Church will help us to secure a just estimate of his view of the purpose of the sacraments. We are prepared to find his fundamental dualism asserting itself also in this branch of his system. "For to a complete sacrament two things are necessary, an inner and spiritual element and an outer, bodily element."† The sacraments, therefore, are profound mysteries, and not merely external ceremonies.‡ They are more than the mere addition of the outer Word to the given elements.§ The prime requisite here too, therefore, is precisely that which has been so often emphasized, the "judgment of the spiritual man," the correct interpretation of the Scriptures. It is this lack of spiritual insight that is the cause of all error concerning the sacraments.|| For this very reason the eucharist should continually be discussed, upon the biblical basis, in order that the true view may be obtained.¶ More must be made, in any event, of the spiritual significance of the ordinances.\*\* The failure of his opponents to do this convicts them of being the real despisers of the sacraments.†† On the other hand, he strongly protests against the justice of this charge so frequently made against him.‡‡ It is not with the sacraments, but with the misuse of them, that he finds fault. It was his conviction that the Church was misinterpreting these sacred rites that led him to advocate the *Stillstand* in the case of the Supper, and the corresponding custom of substituting for sacramental baptism only a consecratory

\* See the (LVI) *Fragen von der christlichen Kirche*, which are really so many attacks upon the worldly ecclesiasticism of the day, and so many defenses of his own position between the Romanist and Anabaptist extremes.

† B, Part I, p. 140d.

‡ A, p. XIId. Cf. B, Part I, p. 85cd: "Denn wenn man von Sacramenten Christi und seiner christlichen Kirche redet, so redet man vornehmlich von einem Geheimnis und göttlich offenbarten Handel, darin die christgläubige Seele ist und wird gereinigt, erleuchtet, wiedergeboren und von Sünden abgewaschen, durch das Bad des Wassers im Worte, als im Sacrament der Taufe; oder darinnen sie wird gespeiset, getränkt, und gesättigt mit dem Leib und Blut J. Christi, dadurch sie wird im göttlichen Leben erhalten und darinnen immer ferner aufwachsen, als im Sacrament des Nachtmals."

§ Cf. A 505a, 555c.

|| B, Part I, 101b.

¶ A 312d, 393a-c.

\*\* A 492c.

†† A, pp. Xd, XIa.

‡‡ D 15d: "Von den heiligen Sacramenten . . . glaube ich alles was die heilige Schrift sagt und wie sie vom Herrn Christo gelehrt und für die christgläubigen eingesetzt, auch von lieben Aposteln und der christlichen Kirche nach dem Befehl des Herrn sind gebraucht worden und noch in der versammelten Gemeinde Gottes also gebraucht und verstanden sollen werden." Cf. D 21 sq., 544, 973, C 283b, 687d, 730d, B 104c, A 331, 394, etc.





prayer. He takes his stand once more upon the sole mediatorship of Christ.\*

The general principles just mentioned we find exemplified in the statements concerning baptism. The outer rite must be carefully distinguished from the inner reality. "But we must remember that in the complete sacrament of the baptism of Christ two things are present, namely, an external and an internal one; the elemental water and the water of divine grace which purifies the conscience."† The external water cannot cleanse. "Let them know in the first place that the washing away of sins does not belong to the external baptism. Then let them be assured that no external thing, washing or water, can reach or remove sin. In the third place, they do not permit Christ in himself and by himself to be a perfect Saviour. It is therefore a grave wrong to the work of Christ and his Spirit if one ascribes or concedes to the water or other created things in the work of salvation something that belongs to Christ alone."‡

The primary and essential element in baptism, therefore, is the inner grace, the bestowal of which is absolutely independent of the

\* C 448d: "Das ihr begehret zu wissen, wie ihr es richten sollt, dass Nichts äusserliches das Herz erreiche, das sollt ihr richten auf den Handel unserer Gerecht- und Seligwerdung, nämlich das Herz zu bekehren, zu reinigen und erneuern, denn wer vermag solches denn allein Gott und Christus im heiligen Geiste? Das fleischliche Herz wird wohl oft durch äusserliche Dinge bewegt zu Freuden und Traurigkeit; es wird aber drum durch äusserliche Dinge nicht selig noch umgekehrt. Christus ist der Erneuerer des Herzen; er allein vermag die Sünde draus zu nehmen und seine Gnade darein zu geben." Cf. A 597 sqq., 780, C 480c, 619, D 440, 468ab, 738. For extended discussions of what he regarded as an unwarranted emphasis upon the "external" sacraments, see C 1015-1021, and especially the first two letters in Part I of B (pp. 10-146), *Vom Grund und Ursach des Irrtums und Spans im Artikel vom Sacrament des Herrn Nachtmals* and *Vom Verstande, Gebrauch, und Würdigkeit der Sacramente Christi. The Bekenntnis und Rechenschaft von den Hauptpuncten des christlichen Glaubens* (D pp. 1-62) is a précis of his whole system.

† A 195be.

‡ A 32cd. Cf. A 378cd, 497ed, C 397, 438b, 520a, and many other passages in all of the folios. To be sure Luther had taken pains to bring the word of commandment (Matt. xxviii. 19) into connection with the water of baptism: "Wasser thut's freilich nicht, sondern das Wort Gottes so mit und bei dem Wasser ist und der Glaube so solchem Worte Gottes im Wasser trauet; denn ohne Wort Gottes ist das Wasser schlecht Wasser und keine Taufe" (*Der kleine Catechismus*, Part IV, in Schaff's *Creeds*, III, p. 86). None the less, especially in the matter of infant baptism, Luther reopened the way for the magical efficiency of the *ex opere operato* theory of the sacrament. The consecrated water itself, in fact, possessed a divine potency. It was heavenly, holy, *durchgöttet*. Cf. Schenkel, *l.c.*, I, 448 sq.; Thimme, *l.c.*, 898; Hering, *l.c.*, p. 287 sq., and Harnack, *Dogmeng.* III<sup>2</sup>, 792.



external rite.\* The blood of Christ is the only sprinkling that removes the defilements of sin,† or rather—the reason for this characteristic emphasis upon the unity and totality of Christ's person will appear later—Christ himself is the bath of regeneration.‡

Precisely so does the right understanding of the eucharist necessitate a sharp distinction between the outer signs and the inner realities, between the external and the internal sacrament. The parallelism in this respect between the Supper and Baptism is complete. "As I have hitherto spoken of two kinds of water in the Christian sacrament of baptism, so I find in the complete sacramental transaction of the Lord's Supper two different kinds of bread, or food, and drink: namely, a spiritual, divine, heavenly bread, food, and drink, which is the body of Christ given for us and his sacred blood shed for the forgiveness of sins; and a bodily and sacramental bread and drink, which the Lord Jesus before his departure commanded his disciples to break, to eat, and to drink, in remembrance of him."§ The former is then identified, as will have been anticipated, with Christ the Son; it is the bread which is the Lord. The latter is only the "bread of the Lord." Once more, therefore, the whole question turns upon the correct, that is the "spiritual," understanding of the Scriptures. Once more Schwenckfeld can refute the charge that he makes light of the New Testament sacraments. "In the same way I request, wish, and desire that the holy sacrament of the body and blood of Christ be observed by the believing Christians according to the institution, intention, and will of the Lord, with a right understanding, knowledge, and faith, also with a due examination and with the due accompaniments, in a Christian, devout, and reverent manner, and that it be not misused to condemnation through ignorance and superstition. Whether this means rejecting the service of the Word of God and despising the holy sacrament . . . because I distinguish between these things and the Word which is spirit and

\* Cf. Schwenckfeld's remarks about the possibility and the need of an oft-repeated "spiritual feet washing." "Die Füße der Christgläubigen werden immer gewaschen mit dem reinen Wasser, das ohne Unterlass von dem Leibe Christi fließt" (A 209d). Again (C 207a), "Warum treiben sie"—he is speaking of the Lutherans—"nicht auch so fest aufs Füßwaschen? welches der Herr eben so wohl als das Werk ihm nachzuthun hat befohlen: 'So ich euer Meister und Herr euch die Füße gewaschen,' " etc. That is, if the Lutherans take this ceremony spiritually, why should not the sacraments also be so understood?

† A 13d, D 147 235b.

‡ A 31ed; cf. B, Part I, 121d.

§ D 18ab.



life, I will now submit to the Christian Church, your grace, and all pious Christians."\*

But of course the really decisive question as to Schwenckfeld's conception of the purpose of the sacraments is still to be raised. His theoretical distinction, amounting in practice, as we have seen, to a virtual separation between the outer transaction and the inner reality in the Supper, satisfied neither the Romanists and Lutherans on the one hand nor the Zwinglians and Anabaptists on the other. Indeed, much of the persecuted man's literary activity was due to his desire to remove the misapprehensions concerning his views under which he was sure his opponents were laboring. But in spite of his efforts in this direction, it is still to be regretted that the inner nexus of his sacramentarianism has not been more clearly set forth. For this obviously is the crux of the whole problem: are these outer and inner circles of reality truly concentric, or do they lie in such remote planes that all possibility of a causal connection between them is cut off? Does this fundamental dualism result in an absolutely unmediated juxtaposition of altogether disparate elements? Is there at the most only a possible simultaneity between the external and the internal transactions? What sort of balance must be struck between Schwenckfeld's assertion that the sacraments are serviceable, yet are not means of grace? Is he thoroughly consistent with himself in denying the propriety of the term *Gnadenmittel* in any and every sense?

How much injustice in this regard has sometimes been done to the reformer will appear from our answer to these questions. It is difficult to present his views with perfect accuracy and fairness in any other than his own words. What he was bound by rigid self-consistency to say is one thing; what he actually said in conformity with his philosophic and theological presuppositions, on the one hand, and under the influence of the conditions of his situation, on the other, is quite another thing.

The external rites—on at least this point there can be no doubt—are signs and symbols of the inner reality, of the truth, the essence, the *res* or *materia* of the sacraments. This fact, it may be assumed, has become plain in the course of the discussion. There are those indeed who regard this statement as the only proper because the perfect'y exhaustive one.† There can be no doubt that it is the

\* D 545a.

† For example, Hahn, *Schwenckfeldii Sententia*, etc., p. 60, n. 1: "Itaque sacramentis externis Schwenckfeldius putavit non nisi adumbrari res divinas, quas Christus omnibus fidem habentibus quovis tempore distribuit."



mould into which Schwenckfeld most frequently cast his reflections on the teleology of the sacraments. With what sharpness of vision he grasped this aspect of the problem will appear from a citation of several of the most important deliverances. "All external things are only representations which portray or point and lead to the eternal divine truth which is dispensed through the custodian of the holy blessings, through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. God is therefore not concerned about external things, but about that which is represented to the believer by means of the external thing and which is distributed through Christ in the Holy Spirit."\* Again, "the sacraments are indeed spiritual or, if the term be rightly understood, holy, sacramental signs, because they point to holy, spiritual things and signify them. But they cannot impart them, since they have no spiritual, divine power in themselves."† One of the clearest statements on this phase of the subject is the following: "All external things, the sacrament and other things, were instituted by Christ for our sakes, in order that his great benefits and his work in the believing heart may be known and remembered, and that the great riches of the grace of God which he has caused to be manifested to all men in Christ may be known, praised, and magnified in all the world."‡

The external rite, therefore, has at least the function of directing the thought of the participants to Christ, the sole source of saving grace. But is there beyond this any necessary sequence between the outward ceremonial and the bestowal of an inner sacramental blessing?

It is plain that some of the quotations just made leave absolutely no room for an affirmative answer to this question. The unequivocal declarations about the sole mediatorship of Christ must be allowed to retain their force undiminished. That anything in the way of a magical efficiency of the *Gnadenmittel* was to him an unspeakable absurdity; that salvation can, as a matter of fact, be conferred without any means whatsoever by an immediate operation of the Spirit upon the heart; that the blessings conveyed, according to the theories of his opponents, by the sacraments may be daily granted even to those who do not attend to the outward rites; and that the main current of Schwenckfeld's thought tends to sweep away from the sphere of grace every sensuous, external or "creaturely" object,—these propositions may be regarded as established theses. But we must not prejudice the case by sup-

\*Itaque  
divinas,

\* A 201d.

† A 749d; cf. A 750c.

‡ C 580d.





10 dosing that he has reduced his views to a perfectly consistent, unitary system. Granted, for instance, that the Spirit never works through external things: it might still be asked, whether or not he ever works *in* them or *with* them? There can be no doubt that Schwenckfeld, in his strong desire to defend himself against his adversaries by trying to conserve the objective or theological content of the sacraments, did at times approach the Reformed doctrine of the means of grace in the narrowest and strictest sense of the term. The evidence, to be sure, is not abundant. The language used expresses rather the feeling of a conservative disposition than the settled conviction of a severely logical mind. The principle is fairly established, however, that the blessings of salvation are actually bestowed in the right use of the sacraments. "This requires the right understanding and use of the sacraments of Christ, that is the knowledge of Christ according to the Spirit and the dispensation of the mysteries of God in the believing soul, it being the special office of the Holy Spirit to distribute the blessings acquired by Christ unto all believers in the use of his sacraments (*beim Brauche seiner Sacramente*), likewise before and without the use of them."\* To be sure, even here the place of emphasis in the sentence is reserved for the thought that the sacraments are by no means necessary. Likewise characteristic is the difference in the prepositions in the phrases "*durch* Christum" and "*beim Brauche seiner Sacramente*." But the manifest coördination of the two methods of bestowing grace, that "with the use of the sacraments" and that "before or without them," shows that in some real sense external things may mediate grace. In another passage we have not only the preposition *bei* but also *in* used. "But if it is said that such grace comes through the external thing, or that the external thing adds something in the form of an instrument, or that the grace cannot be poured in or given without the external thing, or that it must follow the latter, this is all palpable error. For, in short, the grace of God without and in the external thing (*ohne und beim Äusserlichen*) alone effects salvation, *in* both the sacraments and other spiritual transactions."† When, therefore, the sacrament is truly used, it "brings grace along with itself."‡

\* B, Part I, 85b.

† B, Part I, 97d.

‡ "Dass aber die Sacramente Christi, wo sie recht verstanden und gebraucht werden, *Gnade mit sich bringen* ist wohl aus dem Exempel abzunehmen, so man bedenkt, wenn ein Christglaubiger in der christlichen Kirche wird getauft und ihm alle Wohlthat Christi wird vorgehalten werden, dass er sich ganz und gar Gotte aufopfert," etc. *Ibid.*; cf. B 15d, where it is said that the consecrated bread "ought to serve the mystery of feeding upon the body and blood of Christ."



These citations, then, must be taken as an authentic commentary on the numerous passages in Schwenckfeld that protest against the *Gnadenmittel*. The common representation, that he taught "a plan of salvation without the means of grace,"\* must be understood in the light of the fact that the sacraments when rightly used may and really do convey grace.† Whether or not they may be called "means of grace" will depend, therefore, upon whose definition of the term we employ. Romanists and Lutherans will alike answer in the negative.‡ But in a sense approximating that of the Reformed Church, Schwenckfeld may fairly be said, in spite of his protests, to have "means of grace." His theory of the Supper, as will appear when we discuss the question of the mode of Christ's presence, is distinctively higher than that of Zwingli.§ There is,

\* So, e.g., Weiser, in his article on "Casper Schwenckfeld and the Schwenckfeldians," in the *Mercersburg Review*, July, 1870, p. 150.

† The common representation is, of course, essentially correct, inasmuch as it summarizes the content and also the spirit of the great bulk of passages dealing with the subject. But by an occasional inconsistency Schwenckfeld permitted himself to speak, as we have seen, in terms that compromised the rigor of his system with affection for the time-honored institutions of the Church. His pre-suppositions forbade his making the sacraments means of grace; but the contentions of his adversaries on the right as well as his dissatisfaction with the fanatics on the left, above all the overmastering force of the same words that held Luther captive—the *hoc est corpus meum*—made him sacrifice something of his logic, or, to use more customary but less intelligible language, his "mystical feeling," against external ecclesiasticism.

The practical question concerning the use of the sacraments has of late become acute in the history of the American Schwenckfelders. The younger and more progressive ministers especially are inclined to put a lax construction upon Schwenckfeld's polemic against the "external" rite: they admit that the exigencies of debate betrayed him into ill-balanced assertions, but they are likewise strong in their insistence that according to him the sacraments when rightly used are "means of grace."

‡ Döllinger, *Die Reformation*, I, 239 sq., declares that external baptism according to Schwenckfeld was only an outer reminder and confession of the inwardly received grace; and that the external Supper is only a picture of the inward eating. Kurtz (*Kirchengeschichte*, 9. Aufl., II, p. 150) says Schwenckfeld's doctrine of the Supper is mere symbolism, a charge which the reformer times without number explicitly denied.

§ Zwingli's statements on the eucharistic controversy present, as is well known, marked contrasts. When governed by polemic zeal against the Romanists and Lutherans he seems to deny that the Supper is in any sense a means of grace. Cf. his *Fidei Ratio*, in Niemeyer's *Collectio Confessionum*, p. 24: "Credo, imo scio omnia sacramenta tam abesse ut gratia conferant, ut ne adferant quidem aut dispensent." The positive thought he most emphasizes is that the Supper is "nihil aliud quam commemoratio, qua ii, qui se Christi morte et sanguine firmiter credunt patri reconciliatos esse, hanc vitalem mortem annunciant, hoc est, laudant, gratulantur, et prædicant" (*De vera et falso Religione, Opera*, ed. Schuler and Schulthess, III, p. 263). But it must be remembered that he at times taught that Christ is truly present in the Supper, and that his body is truly eaten by the believing heart. See p. 49.



in fact, so close a resemblance to the Calvinistic doctrine that, with all allowance for essential differences, the term "means of grace" may be applied with almost as much propriety in the one case as in the other. Schwenckfeld and Calvin, in carrying beyond the limits of the Lutheran movement the basal distinction between Romanism and Protestantism, that pertaining to the way in which the soul's relation to God is mediated,\* emphasized the possibility and reality of the direct operation of God upon the religious subject. They furthermore agreed in making the whole Christ the *res* or *materia* of the sacrament, and in making the work of the Spirit a distinguishing feature of their doctrine of the "means of grace," thus aiming to do justice to the objective content of the sacraments as taught by Romanist and Lutheran and the subjective aspects championed by the Zwinglians. Above all, in their spiritual view of the whole process of salvation, in which the sacraments conveyed no unique grace not otherwise obtainable, faith was emphasized as the indispensable condition for securing a dialectic and causal connection between the outer transaction and the inner effect. To be sure, Calvin succeeded in obtaining a far more satisfactory because intimate nexus between the spiritual and the corporeal, the divine and the human elements of the sacramental act, and it was especially his clear recognition of the sealing character of the ordinance that gave his views so speedy and complete a victory not only over those of his theological kinsman Zwingli, but also over those extremists like Schwenckfeld who belonged to a more remotely related spiritualistic school.†

We are bound, therefore, to ascertain more exactly the nature of Schwenckfeld's conception of faith. For it is obvious that it was by this bridge that he sought to span the chasm that lay be-

\* Cf. Baur, *Die Lehre von der Dreieinigkeit*, III, 254.

† Schwenckfeld never attained, and from his premises, as will appear, never could attain, the high vantage-ground from which Calvin could regard the sacraments as seals of the new covenant. Lutheran writers, indeed, are wont to say that Calvin himself was not warranted by his presuppositions in taking so "high" a view of baptism and the eucharist. See, e.g., Kahnis, *Die Lehre vom Abendmahl*, p. 407 sq., and cf. Schenkel, *l.c.*, I, 429 sq. The latter, however, admits that Calvin has given the best solution of the sacramental problem (*ibid.*, and cf. p. XIX). But Schwenckfeld, as we shall find, was prevented by his conception of faith and his theory of the deification of the flesh of Christ, from securing any adequate view either of the work of the Spirit in the application of grace or of faith as the instrument of salvation.

At times, to be sure, attempts were made to vindicate a sealing character for the sacraments. See the Catechism of the Schwenckfelder Werner in Arnold, *Kirchen- und Ketzehistorie* (1740), Vol. I, Th. II, B. XVI, cap. XX, p. 853. But all such attempts really exceed the logical warrant of the premises of the system.



tween his desire to preserve the objective content of the sacraments and his determination to hold fast to what he regarded as the deepest essence of Protestantism, the sole mediatorship of Christ operating directly, that is without the use of any creaturely objects, upon the believer's heart. It is only by securing an adequate grasp of his doctrine of faith that we shall succeed in doing justice to his otherwise altogether anomalous position between the Romanists and Lutherans on the one hand and the Zwinglians and Anabaptists on the other. Only so can we realize how, in his eagerness to preserve the choicest treasures of the new evangelical faith, he took so extreme a position against Rome that he found it impossible, save by an occasional felicitous inconsistency of thought, to regard the sacraments as anything more, in the actual life of the Church, than symbols or means of representing spiritual realities to the physical senses. Only so can we understand the logic of his oft-repeated statement that the external rites must follow, and not precede, the internal transactions.\* Only so can we ascertain both the strength and the weakness of his sacramentarianism and estimate aright his contribution to the eucharistic controversy.

It becomes necessary, therefore, to introduce that larger circle of thought that lies behind and everywhere colors the more superficial considerations thus far presented: to understand his view of faith we have to examine the philosophic presuppositions upon which he based not only his idea of the purpose of the sacraments but his whole conception of the nature of redemption. Concerned as he was for the rights of subjective religion, finding as he did in the spiritual knowledge of his Redeemer the only way unto eternal life, how did he conceive of the nexus of faith by which the soul is brought into contact with the supernatural source of grace in the real or inward sacrament? By the necessity of the case his conception of faith is influenced by his conception of Christ, and his Christology in turn is inseparably linked with his doctrine of the Supper. For him, as for all the participants in the eucharistic controversy, there were in reality two closely related and decisive questions: (1) What is the mode of the Lord's presence in the Supper? and (2) What benefits does faith receive through or, as Schwenckfeld would prefer to say, in the use of the sacrament?†

\* See e.g., A 513c, B 601b.

† It was natural for the editor(s) of the fol. D to close the volume with Schwenckfeld's two doctrinal summaries, often separately published, *Ein Kurzes Summarium von C. Schwenckfelds Glauben und Bekenntnis von Christo dem Sohne Gottes* and his *Kurzes Bekenntnis vom Hl. Sacrament des Herrn Christi Nachtmals*. On the necessary and close connection between the Supper and the nature of





The philosophic dualism underlying Schwenckfeld's system and revealing itself in his Christology posits a twofold activity on the part of God, that of creation and that of regeneration.\* The sharpest distinction is preserved between nature and grace. "The work of creation brings with it the presence of the power, might and strength of God, with which God creates, fills and preserves all things through his right hand, through his Word Christ. . . . Such presence is honorable to God, shows his majesty, power, knowledge and government, that he is a Lord of all things, but it is not specially comforting or salutary to the creatures."† In contrast with this creative activity, which reveals only the presence of power, is the regenerating or gracious activity by which man becomes a partaker of the divine essence: "the other work of God is the work of recreation, which God has exercised especially in the sphere of human life through his right hand, that is through Christ, upon the basis of the first work, and which he still exercises and dispenses in the Holy Spirit. And it brings with itself *præsentiam gratiæ* (that is the presence of grace) with which God is nigh unto all those who call upon him . . . and through which God's right hand in the Holy Spirit cleanses, remakes and regenerates man, in order that God may live and abide in him, being apprehended by faith, and that man may become a partaker of his divine nature and essence; 2 Pet. 1, Heb. 3. Such presence is honorable to God, shows his mercy, friendliness and great love, and is salutary to the creature, a powerful comfort unto eternal life."‡ Redemption is in fact nothing but a deliverance both from the dominion of sin and—what is really fundamental—from the very estate of creaturehood.§ But how, then, must he be constituted who is to effect so genuinely physical or substantial a transformation as that required to make the sinful creature a participant in the divine life and essence? If the Mediator is to succeed in bringing man into

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Christ's person, cf. also D 30b, 82d, A 727 *sqq.* and the many passages in which he shows the relations of these views in the erroneous teachings of his opponents.

\* Baur (*Lehre von der Dreieinigkeit*), Dorner (*Lehre von der Person Christi*), Hahn (*Sententia*) and Erbkam (*Geschichte der prot. Sekten*) have clearly apprehended and more or less fully discussed the nature and importance of this far-reaching distinction. The reader is referred to these works for a more adequate treatment than we can here give of this aspect of the subject.

† See the whole section in *Sendbrief VI*, entitled *Von zweierlei Werk und Gegenwärtigkeit Gottes* (C pp. 104–106).

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

§ It is Hahn's special merit to have established this point. See his dissertation, pp. 8, 21, 49 n. 3, 51 *sqq.* Hahn, however, underestimates the services rendered by Dorner and Baur in proving the central importance of the distinction between "Schöpfung" and "Wiederschöpfung." Cf. Baur, *Theol. Jahrb.*, 1848, pp. 512, 524, *et passim*.



harmony with God, in spite of the fact that creature and Creator are further removed from each other than heaven and earth, wherein lies the capacity of the God-man to accomplish this unique task? Obviously the traditional Anselmic view of the personal union between God and man in Jesus Christ is not adequate to the terms of Schwenckfeld's problem. For if, as we are told, sin pertains to the very status of creaturehood, it is of course essential that the Saviour should in no sense be a creature—not even, Schwenckfeld insists, according to his human nature.\* But, on the other hand, it is equally necessary that the Saviour should be truly man, that he should take upon himself the essence of our human nature. How, then, are the two requirements—that of perfect deity and that of perfect humanity apart from all creaturehood—to be realized in a single and unitary personality?

Schwenckfeld's answer is highly ingenious, but necessarily unsatisfactory; the primary dualism of his system, the very terms in which the problem is stated, preclude any solution. Christ, we are told, was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and by reason of this supernatural generation he is said to belong to the order not of "created" but of "begotten" or "re-created" beings.† He is therefore truly divine, the Son of God, according to the very essence of his being. But he was at the same time born of the Virgin Mary;‡ from her he received his material, substantial body.§ He is,

\* The passages against the "Creaturisten"—those who held that the word "creature" is applicable to Christ in any sense whatsoever—are innumerable. Schwenckfeld's contention, when once his philosophic dualism was taken seriously, had to influence his whole conception of the person of Christ and of the way of salvation. See, e.g., C 806b, 809d, 814a, 823c.

† "Wiederschöpfung," "Zeugen," "regeneratio" and "filiatio" are all practically synonymous. They denote a supernatural communication of grace, in other words of the divine essence itself, and may therefore be predicated of the sinless Christ's humanity as well as of the redeemed. It is needless to add that these terms have no reference to the eternal generation of the Son as the Second Person of the Trinity: the point of contact between the Redeemer and his people is to be sought not in the Mediator's divinity but in his non-creaturely humanity. We have here a characteristic specimen of Schwenckfeld's attempt to theologize on a strictly biblical basis; but into the familiar words of Scripture an entirely new content is poured.

‡ More accurately—though the preposition "aus" is frequent enough—Christ was born "in her and of her," but "out of God" (B 281c, and in the margin).

§ It is not the whole truth, therefore, when Hodge (*Syst. Theol.*, I, 82) declares: "His body and soul were formed out of the substance of God," and that, according to Schwenckfeld, Christ did not have "any material body or blood." Schwenckfeld had no sympathy with the views of Valentinus or Melchior Hoffmann (see D 426, B 163d, A 291, D 79d). He taught that Christ did have a real, material body in his humiliation, and that he even now, in his glorified or "deified" humanity, has flesh and bones. Cf. D 125d: "Ich glaube und bekenne dass Christus Jesus auch noch heute und ewig ein wahrer, ganzer Mensch mit Leib,



therefore, God and man in one. But why is he not then a creature? The response is a double one: first, that the term "creature" denotes merely origin, whereas "man" or "humanity" or "flesh" denotes essence,\* and secondly, that our Lord besides having a divine Father had also a specially sanctified mother, a virgin upon whom had been bestowed the gift—the supernatural, the characteristically spiritual-substantial gift—of faith.† But, as Dorner has pointed out,‡ this is simply to transfer the problem from the constitution of Christ to that of his mother. The solution cannot do full justice to his humanity.§ He is, after all, *sui generis* not simply as to his personality as a whole, but even according to his human nature alone. His flesh has a different origin and different capacities from our own. His flesh from the first is what, according to

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Fleisch, Blut und Gebein ist in himmlischer Klarheit in einem unbegreiflichen Lichte und Wesen." Rather is it the case, then, that Christ had a species of double corporeity—one bodily principle which owed its capacity for glorification and progressive "deification" to the fact that it was essentially divine, and a second bodily principle which was essentially human, derived from the earthly elements of his mother's constitution. Cf. D I, 21, 98, 498, and the many passages that set forth the nature of the "Gottwerdung" of the humanity.

\* Creature is not "ein Wort oder eigentlicher Namen des Selbstandes oder der Natur des Menschen . . . so es doch viel mehr ein Zunamen ist, dadurch allein des Menschen Herkommen angezeigt und die Ankunft des alten Menschen wird bedeutet" (D 125b). And in the margin: "Creatura non est nomen substantiæ rei, sed appellatio rei accidens, sicut nativitas, sicut filiatio, generatio, etc. Ein Mensch sein sagt von einem Wesen; Creatur vom Herkommen des Wesens." At times, however, Schwenckfeld seems to depart from the path of strict consistency. Thus in D 254 he says: "Nach aller Schrift Zeugnis werden allein zweierlei Wesen aller Dinge befunden: ein göttlich und himmlisch, welches allein Gott und seinem Sohne Christus natürlich zusteht, und wem er es aus Gnaden will gönnen; das andere creatürlich und irdisch, in welches Wesen sich auch Christus, der Sohn Gottes, seiner Exanition nach eine Zeitlang um unseres Heiles willen begeben, da er Knechtsgestalt an sich hat genommen." But such a vacillation, quite exceptional in any event, is after all more apparent than real: the distinction between man as to his essence and man as to his origin may even here be made. It was the only logical position for Schwenckfeld to take, if he really meant to attach any importance to his singular idea of the deification of the flesh of Christ.

† For Schwenckfeld's peculiar conception of faith, see p. 69 *sqq.* For the present the remark must suffice, that the effects attributed to the faith of the Virgin Mary have a striking analogue in the application of the same principle in the sacraments: faith is the nexus between God and the human personality receiving the supernatural grace. It is precisely here, as we shall find, that Schwenckfeld's "mysticism" reveals its distinctive features most plainly.

‡ *Geschichte der prot. Theologie*, p. 181.

§ Cf. Baur, *Theol. Jahrb.*, 1848, p. 520: "Da er seinem Ursprung und Wesen nach etwas ganz anders ist als alle andern Menschen, so ist, was er Menschliches an sich hat, nur ein verschwindendes Accidens, das ihm auch nur den Schein eines wahren und wirklichen Menschen giebt. Eine wahre Homousie des Menschen Christus mit andern Menschen konnte Schwenckfeld nicht behaupten."



Schwenckfeld's "mystic" phraseology, ours may become after "faith" has borne its perfect fruit—an essentially supernatural and spiritualized flesh. There are, in fact, two kinds of flesh in the sphere of human life: that of sin, inherited from Adam, and that, resembling the former but dominated by grace, that is by the principle of the divine essence itself, which is a supernatural generation. The former in the case of every believer is "re-created" into the latter. In Christ alone, since the fall of Adam, has there been a true humanity free from the principle of sin.\*

The difficulty is only increased by the attempt to bring the unique character of the Saviour's humanity into causal connection with his mediatorial work in behalf of the race. For it is specifically in the flesh of Christ that we must find his basal qualification to be our Redeemer: the entire scheme of salvation is built upon the principle of the once progressive, but now completely accomplished deification of the flesh of Christ.

It is difficult to present this peculiarity of Schwenckfeld's system in any other than his own words. His language places in boldest juxtaposition the elements of what in reality is an irreconcilable dualism. The Saviour is truly God and truly man, and yet his humanity has become in the strictest sense of the term divine. This is the burden of countless christological utterances; the author's language remains rigidly consistent in the assertion of this absolute inconsistency. We must be content to let his thinking rest in a formula which by every reasonable interpretation simply presents a *contradictio in adjecto*. The practical bearings of this peculiar theory upon the two questions with which we still have to deal, the mode of Christ's presence in the Supper, and the benefits which faith derives from this sacrament, are so important that we cannot forbear bringing the matter somewhat more sharply to view. The following deliverance is typical: "When I say that Christ's flesh is deified, that his flesh or the man Jesus of Nazareth by his glorification, ascension and *primogenitura* from the dead has become God and a Lord of heaven and earth, I mean nothing else than that the human nature in Christ has become altogether similar to the divine nature in glory. I do not mean

\* It is obvious that Schwenckfeld's fantastic distinction between the essence and the accidental or creaturely origin of our nature is due simply to his erroneous conception of sin as something inherent in our very constitution as creatures. Cf. D, p. 107: "Ja ob auch Adam nie gefallen wäre, so wären dennoch seine Nachkömmlingen von Natur, und alles was aus ihm den Ursprung hat, ohne Christum und seine Gnade nichts denn Creaturen und natürliche Menschen gelieben."





that the humanity in Christ is destroyed nor made into the Godhead (*noch zur Gottheit worden*), but that the man in Christ can now do all that God can, and that he in Christ's person, united with the Word, is to be invoked, worshiped, and divinely honored as much as God—one Christ, one Son of God, who is our Lord and God absolutely.”\* In another passage, in discussing the words *Gottwerdung* and *Vergottung*, he cites the fathers in his support: “Thus the fathers mean by the deification of the flesh of Christ, that it is poured through, shot through, irradiated and glorified † with God and the Holy Spirit in all divine fulness—*spiritu repleta divina*, says Ambrose, that it is completely filled with the Holy Spirit and the divine essence and life; and as Cyril writes concerning the sixth chapter of John, that not only the divine nature in Christ but also the human regenerates, that the flesh of Christ has now assumed the whole reality of the Word and attained unto the power of the divine essence; indeed, that his whole body has been filled with the vivifying power of the Spirit; *haec ille*. This we also call deification and becoming God, that God in Christ, albeit in undiminished human nature, is all in all, just as he will finally become all in all in every Christian.”‡ From this point of view he compares the Lutheran preachers with the Arians: as the latter denied the deity of Christ according to the nature of the Word, so the former deny his divine glory according to the nature of his flesh.§

The above citations clearly reveal an apologetic interest in behalf of the perfect humanity of the Redeemer. All, therefore, who represent Schwenckfeld as teaching a conversion or transmutation of the flesh of Jesus into the substance of the Godhead compromise his eccentricities with their own conceptions of what logic would have required him to say.|| Rather are we to think of this change

\* D 514d. The subject is discussed with wearisome prolixity in the tripartite *Confession und Erklärung von der Erkenntnis Christi und seiner göttlichen Herrlichkeit*, in D, pp. 91–319, as well as in many of the lesser treatises of that volume, and in numberless letters in the other folios. No other point in the whole range of controversial discussion elicited from Schwenckfeld so many apologetic and polemic writings; even his peculiar views of the Supper could not be explained without extensive references to this underlying doctrine.

† The German compounds are scarcely translatable: “mit Gott und dem heiligen Geiste in aller göttlichen Fülle ist durchgossen, durchgeuert, durchglanzet und verklaret.”

‡ C 787c.

§ C 100Sa.

|| Inus Klec, *Dogmengeschichte*, II, p. 41, says: “die menschliche Natur sei in die göttliche umgewandelt worden.” Kurtz, *l.c.*, p. 150, is ambiguous: “so dass im Stande der Erhöhung seine göttliche und menschliche Natur vollkommen in eins verschmolzen sind.” Schwenckfeld is careful never to use the verbs “umwandeln” or “verwandeln” or their derivatives, but only “wandeln” or



as a gradual process, as the organic development of the essentially divine principle implanted in his humanity from the moment he was conceived by the Holy Ghost. The author is fond of presenting this *Gottwerdung* of Jesus as the counterpart of the *Menschwerdung* of God.\*

In this progressive deification of the humanity of Christ there are, moreover, two clearly marked stages: much is made of the differences existing between the estate of the Saviour's humiliation and that of his exaltation.† By pressing this distinction and yet strongly holding to the unity of Christ's person, Schwenckfeld seeks to break the force of the objection that his view of the origin of Christ's flesh does injustice to the Redeemer's humanity, and that his view of Christ's passion does injustice to the Redeemer's divinity. For it must be remembered that no one was more concerned than he was to maintain the unity of Christ's person. Even Luther's scholastic makeshift of the *communicatio idiomatum* did not secure a sufficiently intimate union of the two natures. Schwenckfeld wished to have every redemptive act referred to the single divine-human personality and never to either of the two distinct natures.‡ But how can the prime necessity underlying Schwenckfeld's desire to have a real and essential union of God and

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an equivalent; and in spite of all emphasis upon the oneness of Christ's person there is no fusion of the two natures. To be sure, some of the figurative terms employed might fairly be interpreted in that way, but such descriptions must be read in the light of such explicit negations as the following (D 125d): "Ich sage nochmals, dass ich's nicht also halte als ob die Menschheit Christi sei zur Gottheit worden, oder in die Gottheit sei verwandelt, wie mir etliche unbillig zulegen . . . (Ich) glaube und bekenne . . . es ist seine Menschheit geändert oder gewandelt nicht verkehret, noch verzehret, sondern gewandelt spreche ich, durch die himmlische Gloria gebessert und mit göttlichem Reichtum gemehret."

\* See the treatise, *Dass Christus auch nach seinem Menschen der natürliche wahre Sohn Gottes sei*, p. F iiiii; cf. B, pp. 132 sqq., *Sendbrief XIII, Von der Menschwerdung des Worts und Gottwerdung des Menschen in Christo*.

† Sometimes three stages are enumerated. Cf. e.g., A 712a, where—quite in the style of his allegorical exegesis—the forecourt, the holy place, and the holy of holies in the Jewish tabernacle are made to symbolize respectively (1) the incarnation, passion and death of Christ, (2) his resurrection, and (3) his ascension to heaven and session at the right hand of God. Usually, however, the last two constitute a single idea, the second and final stage in the glorification. Cf. also D, pp. 523–531, *Summarium von zweierlei Stande, Amt und Erkennung Christi*.

‡ Cf. D, p. 486 sqq., *Von der göttlichen Kindschaft und Herrlichkeit des ganzen Sohnes Gottes*; *ibid.*, 531–551, *Drei christliche Sendbriefe von der Erkenntnis Christi beide im Leiden und in seiner göttlichen Herrlichkeit*; and the treatise, not in the folios, *Von der Ganzheit Christi beide im Leiden und in seiner Herrlichkeit*. Hence the insistence that Christ should be worshiped even according to his human nature. See the treatise, *Von der Anbetung Christi*.



man in the Redeemer be fulfilled? If the unity of Christ's person is to be preserved—and it was from this point of view and not from the duality of natures that Schwenckfeld viewed the problem—the only possible solution was one which could emphasize the closeness of the union between the two natures only in proportion as time was gained for this progressive development by magnifying the difference between the first and the final stages in the union between the Word and the flesh; that is, in proportion as the incarnation is conceived merely as the initial stage in a process that increasingly deprives the human nature of Christ, in spite of Schwenckfeld's protest, of what in the judgment of the historic Church constitutes its characteristic attributes, till in the last stage the very flesh of Christ has a glory indistinguishable from that of the Godhead itself. After all, therefore, it is not real and essential divinity that becomes incarnate in the historic Christ: it is rather, in the first instance, only the germinal principle of divinity implanted in a human (but non-creaturely) nature.\* Nor, on the other hand, can the deification of the entire God-man, including his humanity, be taken strictly; for in reality it presupposes that the flesh of Christ loses its distinctive properties and becomes essentially spiritual.†

It is, therefore, only by the sacrifice of some of the content of the terms "flesh" and "divinity" that Schwenckfeld can vindicate his peculiar doctrine of the "glory" assumed by the humanity of the Redeemer after his resurrection and ascension. A single passage may serve to give the tenor of many. "I repeat, the Word became flesh in order that it might conform and render similar to itself the flesh which it received into a union with itself, in all divine glory, power, might, and capacity. But this did not happen suddenly, all at once, at the moment of the physical and temporal union, which afterward was destroyed by death, to be followed, however, by a much more glorious and better union: namely, an entirely new, enduring, and altogether divine union and glorification which is to last to all eternity. Only then will the flesh, as Jerome writes in connection with Phil. 2, be completely united and deified, anointed through and through (*durchsalbet*), and glorified by its union with God the Word in the heavenly essence and its transfer (*Versetzung*) into the glory and nature of the fulness of the Godhead; only then indeed will the flesh be perfectly glorious, divine, and spiritual, that is equal to God in honor,

\* See Schultz, *Die Gottheit Christi*, p. 280 sq., for a brief statement of the striking similarity between Schwenckfeld's Christology and that of the later Kenoticists.

† Cf. Baur *Die Lehre von der Dreieinigkeit*, p. 242 sq.



power, and might; this I call the deification of the man Christ or his becoming like unto God, or his perfect glorification.”\* There can be no doubt, moreover, that the reformer’s zeal in this matter led him to put the centre of gravity of his whole system in the work not of the earthly but of the heavenly Christ.† The *summum bonum*, the indispensable condition of salvation, is the spiritual knowledge of the God-man, the “King of grace,” first in his estate of humiliation and then, and chiefly, in his estate of exaltation.‡

The suggestiveness and worth of some of these christological principles it would be idle to deny.§ The strong insistence upon the oneness of the Redeemer’s person, against the Nestorianizing tendencies of the Zwinglians on the one hand, and the unsatisfactory unity based upon a community of attributes taught by the Lutherans on the other, is the dictate of a sound and safe instinct. But his own construction of the biblical data was too much the product of a mind which, in spite of its speculative acuteness and its marked taste for systematic thinking, lacked both the logical vigor and the ethical insight necessary to trace his dualistic principles to their last consequences. Governed primarily by the practical considerations of religious reform, rather than by the speculative interests of the scientific theologian; at times naïvely faithful to the letter of Scripture, but more frequently yielding to the charms of a spiritualistic interpretation, he was capable of the boldest conceivable antagonisms of thought and language: Christ

\* D 513, 514. Cf. the whole Sendbrief, *Von seinen zwei Naturen, vornehmlich von der Glorie des Fleisches Christi*. In this doctrine of the “Verklärung” and “Vergottung” of the Saviour’s humanity lies the reason for the designation so often applied to the Schwenckfelders, in accordance with their founder’s wish, “the Confessors of the Glory of Christ.”

† But it is a mistake to suppose, as is often done, that he denied the fact or the need of an objective atonement. Nor is such an extreme statement as that of Hodge justified: “With him, as with mystics generally, the ideas of guilt and expiation were ignored” (*Syst. Theol.*, I, 83). In view of the many special treatises written by him on the passion and death of Christ, the most that can be said—and this must not be overlooked, for it is a characteristic defect—is that “guilt and expiation,” regardless of the amount of space devoted to them, have no logical relation to his peculiar conception of the atonement. The ideas were not ignored; they were misapprehended. They were biblical ideas and were as such discussed; but they were, as will presently appear, really foreign to the nature of his conception of salvation.

‡ C 475d: “Wer Christum *in priori statu* nicht kennt, wie kann er *ad posteriorem* so bald aspiriren?”

§ Baur, Dörner, Erbkam, Schenkel, and especially Hahn have made it plain that his speculations about the person of Christ by no means merit the summary condemnation visited upon them by such a writer as Planck.





retains his true humanity, yet his very flesh is deified. "Christ Jesus, I say again, with the testimony of Scripture, has indeed two natures: he is indivisibly God and man. But these two natures exist in a divine, eternal life and essence, so that the life and essence of this man, now, after his glorification, ascension to heaven and elevation over all the heavens, is not to be viewed and judged as the life and essence of a man with a natural soul\*—as human reason judges and can never come to a higher knowledge—but it is to be regarded as the divine life and essence, that of God, existing in and like unto God."†

But our purpose in thus setting forth the salient features of Schwenckfeld's doctrine of the person of Christ was none other, it will be remembered, than that of securing a knowledge of the principles that underlay the reformer's answer to the question concerning the mode of the Lord's presence in the Holy Supper. To this problem we now return.

There is much in the Christology of Schwenckfeld which logically would have brought him into closest sympathy with Luther's doctrine of the ubiquity of Christ's body.‡ For however sharply the thought is emphasized that the flesh of Christ has been deified, it is to be remembered that an equal stress is laid upon the confessedly scriptural fact that the Redeemer retains his true humanity after his resurrection and exaltation.§ The apparent approximation to Luther's peculiar view becomes even more deceptive when we consider how Schwenckfeld interprets the term "the

\* "eines seelhaftigen natürlichen Menschen."

† D 844 sq. From the brief account we have here given of Schwenckfeld's Christology it is easy to understand how he has been charged with such diverse heresies as Docetism and Ebionitism, Nestorianism and Eutychianism, and, by modern writers, with Apollinarianism and Kenosis. The verdict depends upon what class of passages the critic is pleased to lay chief emphasis. Thus the question of his Eutychianism has been variously answered. Hahn (p. 76) and Erbkam (*Geschichte d. prot. Sekten*, p. 467) deny the charge. It must be remembered, too, that Schwenckfeld in numberless places repudiated the heresy. But this is not conclusive. Dorner and Baur, accordingly, take mediating views, denying that his teaching is to be placed on one and the same level with historic Eutychianism, yet admitting the presence of the essential features of this error. It is Baur who (*Theol. Jahrb.*, 1848, pp. 527f.) calls attention to the similarity between Schwenckfeld and Apollinaris. Dorner, in both of the works cited, seeks to do justice to the disparate and indeed irreconcilable elements of the problem as stated by Schwenckfeld, and gives on the whole the most penetrating and just criticism.

‡ Cf. Döllinger, *Die Reformation*, I, 241 sq.

§ The passages already cited will have made this abundantly clear.



right hand of God'' as signifying Christ himself.\* For if we bear in mind how strongly the reformer insisted upon preserving the unity of the Redeemer's person and the glorification of his humanity, we might naturally expect to find the strictly divine attribute of omnipresence ascribed to the very flesh of the Saviour. And indeed precisely this step is taken. The logical consequence of this fact, however, is explicitly denied. Christ in his undivided and inseparable divine-human personality is everywhere present as the "right hand of God"; but for that very reason he is above all considerations of place.† Heaven, therefore, the abode of Christ, is no locality—no "*räumlicher Ort*," no "*locus corporalis*." Christ is in heaven, but is not circumscribed. "Therefore we cannot by the aforesaid text [Matt. xiv. 26] detract in any way from the glory of the flesh of Christ and his spiritual nature and essence, nor for that reason confine Christ to a spatial place, who to-day reigns in all divine majesty, and needs no spatial place at all but is exalted over all temporal places and conditions into God and glorified, just as in the resurrection he easily penetrated every place with his body."‡

In spite, therefore, of the deification of Christ's flesh and the intimacy of the union existing between his two natures, Schwenckfeld was bound to differ radically from Luther in his conception of the mode of Christ's presence in the sacrament. The precise points here at issue will become more evident if, in setting forth Schwenckfeld's answer to this decisive question, we reproduce the polemic coloring that characterized his whole system of thought. For after all Luther's doctrine of the ubiquity of Christ's body was

\* It is an interesting analogy that Schwenckfeld employs to body forth his idea of the relation of the three persons of the Trinity. "Daher wird auch Christus die rechte Hand Gottes des Vaters genannt, dass Gott der Vater durch Christum im heiligen Geiste alles hat geschaffen; dass Christus der Sohn, das Wort, ja die rechte Hand Gottes ist vom Vater als dem Haupte ins Fleisch ausgegangen und hat darin und dadurch Erlösung gewirkt im Finger, das ist im heiligen Geiste" (C 104). Cf. in this letter the section entitled "Wie Christus sitzt zu der Rechten Gottes und was es sei" (pp. 106-110), and in the tract *Apologia und Erklärung der Schlesier, etc.*, section 17, pp. G, Gi, Gii.

† "Esse ubique est esse in toto, non in parte; est omnia continere, a nullo contineri," D 257d, in margin. Cf. the section in the *Confession* (Part III) entitled *Vom Wesen des Leibes Christi in der Glorien und ob Christus nach seinen beiden Naturen allenthalben sei, und was allenthalben sein heisse*, and the tract *Verantwortung und Defension für C. Schwenckfeld der Punkte und Irrthümer damit ihn Doctor Joachim von Wat unrecht beschuldigt*, especially paragraph 5: *Dass Christus nicht im Himmel als an einem leiblichen oder räumlichen Orte sitze oder umschrieben*.

‡ B 238b.



only one of many causes that prevented the Silesian reformer from identifying himself, in the eucharistic controversy, with any of the recognized church parties or leaders.

We shall not need to dwell upon his absolute rejection of the Romish theory of the Redeemer's presence in the sacrament. The mass was to him an abominable idolatry.\* For him, as for every other representative of a genuinely Protestant view of the Supper, the bread remained bread and the wine wine.† Transubstantiation is regarded as the figment of an unsanctified mind incapable of discerning the spiritual content of the letter of Scripture.‡ The Church may indeed present offerings to God, but they are the sacrifices of praise and self-denial and service, not of the body of Christ.§ The all-comprehending objection to Rome's answer of the question concerning the mode of the Lord's presence in this rite is that the mass detracts from the glory of "the ruling King of grace."|| Christ is not in any such sense in the Supper that his presence calls for a worship of the sacramental elements.¶ No one can change the bread into his body; he is no longer under the power of sinners.\*\*

From what has been said of Schwenckfeld's objection to the doctrine of the ubiquity of Christ's human nature we are prepared to see him oppose, in the second place, the Lutheran answer to the question concerning the mode of the Lord's presence in the Supper.

We need not enlarge upon the data already given that showed

\* See especially the four prefatory *Sendbriefe* in B and the immediately following epistles.

† Cf. Baur, *Tertullians Lehre vom Abendmahl . . . nebst einer Übersicht über die Hauptmomente der Geschichte der Lehre vom Abendmahl*, in *Tübinger Zeits. für Theol.*, 1839, H. 1, pp. 107ff.

‡ Cf. B, Part I, pp. 8, 100, and B, p. 442c, C 77a, 969b.

§ B, pp. 11, 19f. Cf. the tract *Von dreierlei Leben der Menschen*, especially cap. XX, *Von dreierlei guten Werken des Glaubens und christlichen Lebens* (D 673 sqq.).

|| See B, p. 9, where this general consideration is resolved into fifteen specific arguments against the mass, as follows:

1. *Sophistica illa transsubstantio panis in corpus Christi gloriosum.*
2. *Oblatio corporis Christi sub specie panis pro vivis et defunctis.*
3. *Trina corporis Christi fractio et probabilis applicatio.*
4. *Actionis Christi ipsissima perversio.*
5. *Peccatorum ficta per opus operatum remissio.*
6. *Hostiæ consecratæ tanquam idoli adoratio.*
7. *Christi regis infinitæ gloriæ localis inclusio.*
8. *Pœnitentiæ per missam extinctio.*
9. *Cœnæ dominicæ abolitio.*
10. *Christi regnantis e dextera Patris super altare eorum detractio.*
11. *Regis e regno suo characteristicæ expulsio.*
12. *Verborum de corpore et sanguine Christi falsa ad panem relatio.*
13. *Sanctorum contra sacerdotium et mediationem Christi invocatio.*
14. *Somoniaca missarum nundinatio et gratiæ venditio.*
15. *Precatio cœca et inhibita.*

¶ A 105a.

\*\* *Ibid.*



how Luther in his doctrine of the sacraments, in trying to hold a middle course between the Romanists and the fanatics,\* was compelled to approximate the former by the logic of his sharp attack upon the latter. He not merely emphasized anew the real objective content of the sacrament, but identified this content with the material or corporeal presence of the Redeemer in a manner that made it possible that the body of Christ might be "distributed, eaten, and masticated by the teeth" even of an ungodly and unbelieving man.† Schwenckfeld therefore rejects the Lutheran as much as the Roman Catholic idea of the consecratory act in the eucharist. "Therefore *consecrare* does not mean to convert the earthly into the heavenly, or to transubstantiate. Nor does it mean to unite one thing with another, as the Lutherans imagine, a *sacramentalem unionem panis cum Christi corpore*, nor an *impanationem*, eine Einbrötung, *vi verborum*, . . . but it signifies to separate, to accept, by prayer to bless or consecrate something, to give thanks unto God, to remember the benefits of Christ, as also *apud panem vel in pane eucharistico* to celebrate the death of Christ, to represent the heavenly reality, to praise and thank Christ for his spiritual food unto eternal life. It does not mean to seek the divine and heavenly in *pane eucharistico*, much less to regard the bread itself as such."‡ As this passage indicates, Schwenckfeld represents the Lutheran doctrine as teaching impanation.§ The sense in which the term is used, however, does no injustice to the peculiar views of this class of his opponents. For while he fails to grasp the full significance of the active principle of faith in their system, he clearly apprehends the inadequacies of their "sacra-

\* Cf. *Wider die himmlischen Propheten*, St. Louis edition, Vol. XX, p. 251: "Darum gehen wir zwischen beiden hin und machen nichts weder geistlich noch leiblich, sondern halten geistlich was Gott geistlich und leiblich was er leiblich macht."

† See his "Bedenken" concerning union with the Zwinglians, dated December 17, 1534, in the St. Louis edition, XVII, col. 2052. Of course the *Formula Concordiæ* (Epitome, Art. VII, Negativa 21; Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, III, p. 146) utterly rejects and condemns "Capernaiticam manducationem corporis Christi quam nobis Sacramentarii contra suæ conscientię testimonium, post tot nostras protestationes, malitiose affingunt," etc. But it was precisely with the crass literalism of Luther that Schwenckfeld had to deal. Cf. C 236c. Particularly objectionable was the statement in Luther's last *Short Confession on the Holy Sacrament* that the bread in the Supper is the Lord's body, which the godless man or Judas receives orally just as much as do St. Peter and all the saints (St. Louis edition, XX, col. 1778). Schwenckfeld wrote a special treatise on the subject: *Ob Judas und die ungläubigen, falschen Christen den Leib und das Blut Jesu Christi im Nachtmahl des Herrn empfangen*.

‡ A 856c. Cf. C 148, B 53d, 61c, 143b.

§ Cf. also A 415b, B, Part I, 101a, B 38d, C 75c, 97c, 178ff.





mental union'' between the bread and the body of Christ. With whatever name he chooses to label the Lutheran doctrine,\* he reveals in his refutations a clear understanding of the precise issues, as appears from his sixfold argument against the theory: It is contrary (1) to the content of all Scripture; (2) to the nature of the (eternal) Word; (3) to the character of genuine faith; (4) to the kingdom, New Testament, and high priesthood of Christ; (5) to the honor and glory of God; and (6) to the institution of the Supper and the usage of the early Church.† The Lutheran formula "in, with, and under" is condemned as an artificial interpretation of the words of institution.‡ The Lutheran view is after all a prop for the papacy. "For although Luther out of God's gracious revelation pointed out many errors of the papacy"—in this sentence we have Schwenckfeld's attitude to the conservatives on the right wing accurately pictured—"it was not given him of God to reform the sacraments, nor to establish a united, blessed Christian Church; he failed even to this extent, that in the article concerning the sacrament, upon which the whole papacy and anti-Christian kingdom with its foundations, masses and other characteristics is dedicated, he only confirmed this Church, inasmuch as he fought so violently in behalf of the papists, that every priest, no matter what sort of man he is, might *per verba consecrationis* bring down Christ from heaven upon the altar into the bread or under its form.'"§

It is plain, therefore, that, apart from all the christological difficulties involved, Luther's theory of the substantial presence of the Redeemer's body was too gross and massive a literalism to suit the spiritualistic presuppositions of a man like Schwenckfeld.||

\* It is well known how the Lutherans object also to the term consubstantiation. See, e.g., Krauth, *The Conservative Reformation and its Theology*, pp. 130, 339 sq. et passim. But so far at least as Luther, Schwenckfeld's protagonist, is concerned, there can be no valid objection to the use of the term consubstantiation, or even its partial equivalent inpanation, provided only the idea of a local or physical inclusion of the material body of Christ be eliminated.

† See B, Part I, p. 18, and the whole of the first letter, *Vom Grund und von der Ursoche des Irrthums beim Sacrament des Herrn Nachtmahls*.

‡ "Etliebe sagen er sei im Brot, Etliebe untERM Brot, Etliebe sagen er sei das materiale Brot selbst, da man bald ihre Ungewissheit mag finden. Denn was in, mit, oder unter einem Ding ist, kann ja das Ding nicht selbst sein, wie ihr wisset. Es werden auch solche mit ihren 'in, mit, oder unter' durch die Worte 'Das ist mein Leib' (auf welche sie dennoch fest trotzen) selbst überwunden" (A 415be). § C 519d.

|| It is not necessary to make special reference to Melancthon. Melancthon expressed a no doubt common judgment upon the Silesian when in a letter to Frecht, of October, 1535, he called him "stultum magis quam improbum" (*Corpus Reformatorum*, ed. Bretschneider, II, 955); and in 1556 his chief objection



But if the Romanists and Lutherans, according to Schwenckfeld, practiced idolatry in the eucharist, Zwingli and the Anabaptists made too little of this sacrament. Before setting forth his own views, therefore, it may be advantageous to consider his objections to the Swiss doctrine concerning the mode of Christ's presence in the Supper.

The key to Zwingli's position is found, of course, in his symbolic interpretation of the verb in the words of institution: *est* is equivalent to *significat*. The Supper is, therefore, primarily a memorial of the Saviour's death, a symbolic act picturing this redemptive fact; while at the same time stress is laid upon the character of this rite as a badge of Christian faith and as a communion with Christ and with the fellow-believers.\* The Supper is a sign and seal of a grace already bestowed, rather than a means by which to secure the grace itself. It must be added, however, that Zwingli at times unequivocally asserted the spiritual presence of Christ in the sacrament. To be sure his polemic attitude led him rather to emphasize the absence of the Saviour's body, but the other positive factor is not to be forgotten.†

was to the marvelous literary activity of the "hundred-handed" "Stenckfeldius" and his "milites, qui ipsius nomine non solum scripta spargunt sed etiam seditiones movent, jactitant adflatus, et abducunt homines a publico ministerio et a lectione et cogitatione doctrinae" (*ibid.*, VIII, p. 740). Schwenckfeld in turn simply identified Melancthon with the Lutheran movement, and made no allowance for the mediating tendencies on the eucharistic question revealed by the author of the Augsburg Confession in the editio of 1540. Nor indeed could Schwenckfeld consistently have adopted even the latest concessions of Melancthon. For in proportion as the latter receded from his Romanizing position of 1530 and admitted the figurative interpretation of the words of institution, he was simply transferring himself from one to another of the extreme parties between which Schwenckfeld tried to maintain himself. For the condemnation of Schwenckfeld by the Schmalcald theologians, including Justus Jonas, Bugenhagen, Melancthon and Amsdorf, and for Schwenckfeld's reply to their "misunderstanding" of his views, see C 691ff.

\* Zwingli's eucharistic views are fully discussed by August Baur, *Zwingli's Theologic: Ihr Werden und ihr System*. See especially I, 357ff., 427ff.; II, 295ff., 500ff.

† "Adserimus igitur non sic carnaliter et crasse manducari corpus Christi in cœna, ut isti perhibent, sed verum Christi corpus credimus in cœna sacramentaliter et spiritualiter edi a religiosa, fidei et sancta mente, quomodo et divus Chrysostomus sentit. Et haec est brevis summa nostræ, immo non nostræ, sed ipsius veritatis, sententiæ de hac controversia" (*Confessio ad Franciscum Francorum Regem*, in Niemeyer's *Collectio Confessionum*, p. 72). Adamson, *The Christian Doctrine of the Lord's Supper*, p. 61, in his account of Zwingli's views, is incomplete and even misleading; but he has done well to emphasize anew the higher factors in this type of doctrine. Cf. also Elbrard, *Das Dogma vom hl. Abendmahl und seine Geschichte*, II, 220 sqq.



From what has already been said we are prepared to find Schwenckfeld objecting to Zwingli's conception of heaven as a locality;\* to his strong insistence that the body of Christ, spoken of in Matt. xxvi. 26, is that consigned to death and not the risen body,† and to the rhetorical device, called *allaoisis*,‡ whereby a statement made concerning one of the two natures in Christ is to be referred to the other without prejudicing either the unity of his person or the distinction of his natures. But the chief objection was that against the symbolic interpretation of the words of institution. Schwenckfeld here clearly discerned that the Zwinglian view embodied a rationalistic tendency.§ He complained that it reduced the Supper to a meal that was nothing more than the manna or paschal lamb of the Jews.|| In his judgment no symbolic construction of the verb could do justice to the blessed but mysterious reality of the sacrament, for which faith is the indispensable condition. In spite, then, of the points of contact between his view and that of the Swiss¶—the points, namely, in which both opposed the Lutheran and Roman Catholic doctrines—Schwenckfeld never could rest satisfied with the primary consideration of Zwinglianism, that the elements after all only symbolize the body and blood of Christ. By the ardor of his deep piety rather than by the logic of his system, he magnified the reality of the sacramental grace with a zeal that appeared all the more impressive because his philosophic presuppositions seemed to annihilate the external ordinance itself.

We need not adduce the scattered references to Oecolampad, Capito and Bucer.\*\* The first, indeed, emphasized the idea of a sacramental nourishment, very much as Schwenckfeld did, and considerably enriched Zwingli's refutation of the doctrine of the corporeal presence in the Supper.†† But the solution offered by

\* C 597d, 795b.

† *Zwingli Opera*, Schuler et Schulthess, III, p. 523. Cf. Schwenckfeld's *Bekennntnis von der göttlichen Herrlichkeit des Leibes, Fleisches und Bluts Christi*, in D, pp. 263ff.

‡ A 597bc.

§ Cf. A 727b, B 240a.

|| A 667d.

¶ Zwingli himself (*Opera*, II, Abt. 3, p. 23), in his *Vorrede* of 1528 to Schwenckfeld's *Anweisung*, declares that the latter's views are not opposed to his own, but rather included in them. He here tries to endorse Schwenckfeld's exegesis by citing a Hebrew analogue. Cf. A 672.

\*\* See especially A 673ff.

†† Goetz, *l.c.*, p. 72; cf. Kahnis, *l.c.*, pp. 332 *sqq.* Schwenckfeld even fancied that his own view of the difference between the inner and the outer Word was shared by Oecolampad. See C 336, where he approvingly quotes the Swiss reformer's comment on Ezek. iii.



Oecolampad, that of interpreting the term *corpus* in the words of institution as the equivalent of *figura corporis*, was not a whit more attractive to the Silesian than was Zwingli's. In his judgment both deprived the sacrament of its deepest essence. Capito had, to be sure, thoroughly approved of Schwenckfeld's doctrine as early as 1529.\* The same is true of Bucer, who was displeased with Luther's harsh treatment of the Silesian.† But later under Bucer's influence Capito likewise became a bitter opponent of Schwenckfeld's eucharistic (and ecclesiological) views.‡

It is time, however, to let Schwenckfeld present his own positive view of the mode of Christ's presence in the Supper.

He himself tells us at some length the facts concerning the origin and growth of his peculiar doctrine.§ Unable to believe, as the Romanists and Lutherans taught, that even a Judas Iscariot could eat the body of Christ, and unable to accept the positive elements of Zwingli's teaching as sufficient, Schwenckfeld felt himself moved to an independent study of the question which the Carlstadt-Luther controversy had already made the most prominent issue in the field of religious discussion. Being unfamiliar with Greek at that time—it was the year 1525—he submitted his views to his friend Val. Krautwald, of Liegnitz. Krautwald at first sharply opposed him, whereupon Schwenckfeld sent him some *duodecim quæstiones* or *argumenta contra impanationem*.|| Krautwald himself now passed through an experience very similar to that of his correspondent: there was a season of profound intellectual and spiritual anxiety concerning the meaning of the eucharist, when suddenly, after three days' meditation and prayer, he received a divine revelation,¶ teaching him a new and more satisfactory interpretation of

\* See the preface, by Capito, to the *Apologia und Erklärung der Schlesier dass sie den Leib und das Blut, etc., . . . nicht verleugnen*; cf. A 673ff.

† Schneider, *l.c.*, Abt. I, p. 9, and n. 15, p. 28f.

‡ Gerbert, *l.c.*, pp. 188–193.

§ The leading passages are contained in C p. 24ff., *C. Schwenckfelds Handlung und Gespräch mit den Gelehrten zu Wittenberg . . . vom rechten Verstande der Worte "Das ist mein Leib,"* and C p. 20 sqq., *Von der Offenbarung des rechten Verstandes beim Nachtmahl und Essen seines Leibes* (anno 1540). Erbkam, *Geschichte*, etc., p. 370f., gives the gist of the narrative. Cf. Hampe, p. 11ff., Planck, V, 1, Buch IV, cap. 7, and Arnold, *Kirchen- und Ketzer Hist.*, I, Th. II, Buch XVI, cap. XX, p. 838.

|| C 22.

¶ We need not by this term understand anything more, in the case of either Schwenckfeld or Krautwald, than the sudden enlightenment of the mind earnestly seeking the true sense of Scripture. For Krautwald's experience see the letters written by him to Schwenckfeld and incorporated in C as *Sendbriefe* I and II, and with this compare Schwenckfeld's story, C 22ff.





the much discussed words. Thus encouraged Schwenckfeld went to Wittenberg,\* to submit his views to Luther. The interview was, on the whole, encouraging to the inquirer. But "about two months later" Luther is said to have written him a sharp letter, closing with the words: "In short, either you or we must be the devil's bondsmen, because we both claim the Word of God in our behalf."† Nothing daunted, however, the two friends confirmed each other in their singular view and soon the break with Luther was complete.

We may come to the heart of the matter by following the exegetical arguments with which Schwenckfeld sought to buttress his theory.‡ He inverted the words of institution and made the pronoun a "spiritual demonstrative," yielding the sense: "My body is this, namely, bread or true nourishment for the soul; my blood is this, namely, drink or true refreshment for the soul." In support of this exegetical device reference was made to countless alleged analogous texts, as, for example, Gen. xvii. 10, "This is my covenant," etc.; Exod. xii. 27, "It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover"; Ezek. v. 5, "This is Jerusalem."§ Köstlin is doubtless correct in attributing the opposition of the Silesian to the figurative interpretation to the influence of Luther himself,|| since he had insisted that even in such passages as 1 Cor. x. 4, "and the rock was Christ," the verb is to be taken literally so that the sense would be, Christ

\* This was at least his second trip thither. The first had occurred toward the end of 1521. Cf. Schneider, *Über den geschichtlichen Verlauf*, etc., Abt. I, p. 4. This does not, however, conflict with the more usual statement that the visit occurred in 1522; for he stayed there at least long enough to attend the official investigation on January 1, 1522, by Melancthon, into the doings of the Zwickau prophets.

† C p. 22c. Erbkam, *l.c.*, p. 371 n., insists—following the Erlangen edition of Luther's works (Vol. 53, p. 383)—that the date of Luther's reply was August 11, 1526, and that therefore the "two months" here named were in reality nearly ten, inasmuch as the interview was held, according to C 24, early in December, 1525. (Goetz, *l.c.*, p. 77, n. 2, wrongly represents Köstlin, *Martin Luther*, II<sup>2</sup>, p. 82, as saying that the interview itself occurred in December of the year 1526). Enders, however (*Briefwechsel Luthers*, V, 338), and following him the editors of the St. Louis edition (Vol. XXIIa, p. 851), put the date of the letter in question at April 14, 1526. Even so the term "two months" must be taken as a round expression for four months. Moreover, the concluding sentence, quoted above, is not to be found in that form in the epistle. Schwenckfeld must be understood as giving merely the spirit of Luther's reply.

‡ The "credit" of the discovery belongs to Schwenckfeld; for its scientific vindication, however, he was largely—at least until he became master of the Greek language—indebted to Krautwald. Cf. Hampe, p. 11.

§ Cf. A 704.

|| *Martin Luther*, II<sup>2</sup>, p. 83.



was really and truly the rock, namely that spiritual rock.\* In the same manner Schwenckfeld now and ever after insisted upon the literal interpretation of the verb and the "spiritual" interpretation of the (predicate) pronoun "this."†

The rationale of this singular view must be found in the fundamental dualism of Schwenckfeld's system of thought. There are in short two kinds of bread in the Supper: the physical and the spiritual; the bread of the Lord and the bread which is the Lord. Each has its purpose: "There are therefore two kinds of bread and drink to be considered in the complete sacramental transaction of the Lord's Supper, where it is celebrated with the right understanding, faith, and knowledge, in the due course of grace: one for the inner, the other for the outer man that believes. The inner or spiritual bread or food, that feeds the soul, no one can give, as has been said, save only Christ in the Holy Spirit; and this must under all circumstances precede. . . . Thereupon follows the sacramental, external eating to proclaim the death of the Lord and to give thanks for his salvation and nourishment."‡ For this reason the pronoun (*hoc*) is no *corporalis demonstratio ad oculum*, but a *spiritualis demonstratio ad intellectum*.§ To these two sacra-

\* The mere inversion of the words of institution ought not, of course, to be regarded as an insuperable objection to the theory. Cf. Rückert, *Das Abendmahl, sein Wesen und seine Geschichte in der alten Kirche*, who, though controverting Schwenckfeld's interpretation, yet admits (p. 66f.): "Das griechische Prädikat geht seinem Subjekt voran, so lange kein Grund zum Gegenteil ist. In so fern läßt Schwenckfeld mit seiner Auffassung recht." And cf. Goetz, who declares, *l.c.*, p. 77, that "die griechische Wortstellung in der Brotformel des Mt. und Mk., nur für sich und rein grammatisch betrachtet, eigentlich die Deutung Schwenckfelds mehr begünstigt als die Luthers, bezw. als die gewöhnliche." In any event the essence of his exegesis is found not in the changed order of the words, but in his interpretation of the *τοῦτο*.

† He was thoroughly familiar with the fantastic view of Carlstadt, who, emphasizing the difference in gender between the *τοῦτο* and the *ἄρτος*, declared that the former must refer to the Lord's body (*σῶμα*), and that the Saviour when instituting the Supper pointed to his body as if to say: "This (body of mine) is my body (about to be) broken for you; this (blood) is my blood (about to be) shed for you." See the excellent account of Carlstadt's theory by Göbel, in *Theol. Studien und Kritiken*, 1842, pp. 329-354. For Schwenckfeld's brief but adequate criticism of Carlstadt, see C 61b, C 175d (anno 1526), and C 566.

‡ B 72d. This is the burden of countless passages in the folios and the separate treatises. Cf. B 564b on the *Zweierlei Ordnung aller Dinge*. In D 18 the distinction between the inner spiritual and the outer physical eating is connected with Augustin's distinction between the *sacramentum* and the *res sacramenti*. Cf. also D, p. 897, *Von den zweierlei Brod und Trank in des Herrn Nachtmahl*. The necessity of appropriating the spiritual before the material food in order to partake worthily of the sacrament is emphasized in A 739a. The error of his opponents is ascribed, as usual, to a lack of spiritual discernment in the reading of the Word (A 657d, 670a). § C 134f.



mental realities, the spiritual content and the sensuous sign, moreover, the two declarations in the words of institution closely correspond: "This is my body," and "this do in remembrance of me." "We thus write and maintain, that in the complete Supper of the Lord two things are to be found: one is that which the Lord did and accompanied with appropriate remarks, when he took the bread, gave thanks, and broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: 'Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you'; and likewise the cup. The other thing is that which Christ afterward commanded his disciples to do when he said: 'Do this in remembrance of me.' "\*"

As implied in this passage and frequently stated elsewhere, the presence of the true and spiritual bread of life is the logical prius in the whole sacramental transaction. And there ought to be no question about Schwenckfeld's wish to emphasize, with all the enthusiasm of his mystic piety, the real presence of the Redeemer at his table. For although this has been often denied,† the arguments adduced only show that the reformer did not teach the corporeal or bodily presence in the Roman or Lutheran sense. The Saviour is truly or "really" present, though his body is not there either under the "accidents of the bread and wine" or "in, with, or under" those elements. "That the presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper is not on this account denied" was a favorite thesis.‡ He expresses his delight in the conviction of a correspondent, "that in the Lord's Supper his body, flesh and blood, indeed the Lord Christ himself, is truly (*wahrhaftiglich*) and essentially (*wesentlich*) received."§

The following passage will serve to show conclusively that he held to what must in all fairness be called a true or actual or "real" presence: "[I believe] that the true body and blood of Christ is *vere* present to faith in the mystery of the holy sacrament (if it is observed and understood according to his institution). For that reason, too, it is called by the Church '*mysterium fidei*,' inasmuch

\* A 761d.

† *E.g.*, Goetz, *l.c.*, p. 75: "Auch Schwenckfeld verwarf, wie die Schweizer, die wirkliche Gegenwart." So also Walch, *Einleitung in die Religionsstreitigkeiten*, 4. und 5. Theil, 1736, p. 1012: "In der Lehre vom Abendmahl läugnete er die wesentliche Gegenwart des Leibes und Bluts Christi." Even Hahn, *l.c.*, p. 14, declares: "Apparet ex his, cur ne divinam quidem Christi naturam Schwenckfeldius in pane atque vino eucharistico vere præsentem cogitare potuerit, non ex alia nempe causa, nisi quod sint elementa creata, a quibus divina essentia absolute sit separata."

‡ B 74a.

§ B 119c.



as it is only by the light of faith that one can rightly understand and celebrate the ordinance, and thus in the spirit of faith eat the body of Christ and enjoy participation in him. . . . [I believe] that in the Lord's Supper, or in the mystery of the sacrament (as the fathers call it), believers eat the body of Christ, not as a sign or only figuratively, in thought, but *vere*, truly (*wahrhaftig*), essentially (*wesentlich*), and in a sensible manner (*empfindlich*) for the nourishment of their souls, and truly drink his blood in and out of the living Word of God.'\*

These citations will have served to point out both the similarities and the divergencies between Schwenckfeld's view and the views of his various classes of opponents concerning the mode of Christ's presence in the sacrament. On the one hand, the opposition to the literalism of the Romish and the Lutheran doctrines must be said to exclude every possibility of a corporeal presence.† On the other hand, the points of contact with the Swiss or Reformed doctrine are equally obvious. At first sight, indeed, it would appear that Schwenckfeld's conception of the words of institution is virtually the same as that of Zwingli or Oecolampad; that whereas Zwingli introduced the symbolic principle into the verb (*est*), and Oecolampad into the noun (*corpus*), Schwenckfeld did precisely the same thing by his "spiritual," or let us rather say his spiritualistic, interpretation of the pronoun (*hoc*). It must be admitted, of course, that Schwenckfeld regarded the sacramental elements primarily as signs or vehicles of representation.‡ But while accepting in the main Zwingli's anti-Romish and anti-Lutheran interpretation of the words of institution, Schwenckfeld cannot be said to have been satisfied with the rationalistic spirit of the Swiss reformer's general conception of the sacrament. Schwenckfeld's positive and most

\* D 50 sq.

† "Wenn euch aber jemand sagte C[aspar] S[chwenckfeld] untersteht sich zu hindern dass viele Menschen nun nach erkannter Wahrheit das irdische, gebackene Brot mit dem M[artin] L[uther] nicht für Gott halten und abgöttischerweise anbeten, die Seligkeit dabei suchen, einen bröthernen Christum haben, dass man die Menschen drauf weist, da möchte ich gerne hören was ihr dazu würdet sagen."

‡ Schenkel, *Das Wesen*, etc., I, p. 558, even goes so far as to say: "Dass Brod und Wein für Schwenckfeld keine andere Bedeutung als diejenige eines Darstellungsmittels hat, bezeugt er schon damit, dass er sich gegen den von Luther und auch den Vermittlern gebrauchten Ausdruck 'sacramentliche Einigung' (zwischen Christi Leib und Blut und den äussern Zeichen) entschieden erklärt." But this would hold equally against the Reformed view. Moreover, the assertion in this extreme form fails to do justice to the many passages, only a few of which have been cited, that insist upon the true or real presence of Christ, not indeed in a "sacramental union" with the physical elements, but in or at the Supper.





characteristic elements, therefore, such as his emphasis upon the real presence and upon the profound mystery of the inner sacramental transaction, his idea of the nature of the blessings bestowed upon the worthy communicant—in other words of the reality and worth of the strictly objective content of the sacred ordinance when rightly employed—suggest a comparison with the Calvinistic rather than with the Zwinglian or early Swiss view.\*

For Schwenckfeld, like Calvin, taught an essentially figurative interpretation of the words of institution, the difference being that the latter made the verb and the former the pronoun bear a spiritual meaning. Both insisted that the sacrament makes a real offer to the communicant not merely of the body and blood of Christ but also of his whole person and work, including therefore all the blessings of his redemption.† For both faith was of such cardinal importance that, whereas the Lutheran and the Roman views taught a real presence of the body of Christ in such terms as made it possible even for the unworthy and the unbelieving to “eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood,” they insisted that without faith the participants received only the signs and that to their condemnation. Again, Schwenckfeld, like Calvin, not only avoided this too intimate association between the sacramental substance and the sacramental signs, but sought rather to lay all emphasis upon the immediacy of the effect produced upon the believer by the entrance, not into his mouth but into his soul, of the spiritual substance of the Redeemer’s body. Above all, Schwenckfeld, like Calvin, made much of the glorified humanity of the Saviour, of his dynamic

\* Cf. Hampe, *l.c.*, p. 12: “so viel ist aber aus den kurzen Andeutungen wohl klar geworden, dass Schwenckfeld ungefähr dasselbe lehrte, was etwa 15 Jahre später als Calvinische Lehre weite Verbreitung fand.” Niedner, *Geschichte der christlichen Kirche*, 1846, p. 676, n. 1, declares: “Es ist wesentlich das calvinische Sich-erheben-lassen des gläubigen Geistes zu der vergotteten [this last word is not, of course, to be understood as referring also to Calvin’s christology] Menschheit Christi, durch die Allgegenwärtigkeit seines heiligen Geistes; also ohne eine örtliche Selbstversetzung entweder des Menschengеistes in den Himmel oder des Christusleibes auf die Erde.” It must be remembered, however, that Schwenckfeld objected as much to Calvin’s as to Zwingli’s figurative interpretation of the verb *est*. Cf. C 524, where the two are placed together for criticism. Logically, however, his protest against the figurative interpretation is not warranted: we find here another illustration of the discrepancy between his negations and his affirmations.

† Schwenckfeld’s doctrine of the true bread of life has made this clear. The point will be more fully discussed in connection with the question of the benefits to be derived from a right use of the sacrament. For Calvin’s views, see his *Institutio*, Lib. IV, especially c. XVII, sections 10–18.



presence in the Supper, of that divine energy that emanated from the body of the exalted Lord of life.\*

In this virtually Calvinistic sense, therefore, Schwenckfeld taught a true or real presence of Christ in the eucharist. A number of further similarities between his view and that of the Reformed leaders will emerge when we now consider his response to the second specific question which engaged the minds of the sacramentarian controversialists of that day, namely, What are the benefits to be derived from the right use of the sacred institution? The answer has already been given by way of necessary implication. But a more adequate discussion of this point will reveal additional characteristic elements of Schwenckfeld's system of thought.

We have seen how his fundamental dualism affected his conception of the nature of the sacraments in general and, in particular, of the mode of Christ's presence in the Supper. There is an outer and there is an inner transaction; a physical or earthly bread and wine, and a spiritual or heavenly bread and wine: and corresponding to these there is a carnal eating and drinking, and there is a spiritual eating and drinking. And it is obviously with these subjective acts, these assimilative processes that we must now concern ourselves, if we would ascertain the benefits imparted to the worthy or believing communicant.

Here, as elsewhere, we find Schwenckfeld not only acquainted with the theological battle-cries of the day but thoroughly dominated by their influence; but here, as elsewhere, his use of them is peculiar to himself. In harmony with his view of the eucharist as a double reality he distinguishes between two generic kinds of benefits, those derived from the outer ceremony and those derived from the inner mystery. The external act or the *commemoratio*, whereby

\* The mystical features of Calvin's doctrine of the eucharist are as difficult to understand as are Schwenckfeld's peculiarities. Ebrard, *Das Dogma vom hl. Abendmahl*, II, 458 sqq., gives what must doubtless be regarded as the fittest solution of the problem, when he shows how the *substantia* of Christ's presence in the Supper denotes, according to Calvin, not the material substance of his body, but that "essence of the glorified Christ" which is to be conceived primarily as a power, an energy, an "actus in actu non extensum in extenso." The similarity on this point between Calvin and Schwenckfeld is most striking. But there is a difference. Calvin never allows, as Schwenckfeld does, the glorification of the Redeemer's human nature to amount to a "deification." Moreover, closely connected with this is the fact that Calvin represents the Holy Spirit as the mediator of the spiritual blessings, whereas Schwenckfeld, with a consistent regard for his mystical, physico-spiritual presuppositions, was rather inclined to ascribe this office to the deified God-man in his own person. On the mystical elements of Calvin's doctrine of the Supper, compare also André Duran, *Le Mysticisme de Calvin*, pp. 62ff.



the Saviour's death is proclaimed, is at the same time a symbol of that internal act, the *manducatio*, by which faith appropriates the blessings of salvation. "These two (namely *manducatio* and *commemoratio*) must be well distinguished in a divine transaction and not be confounded. The eating takes place internally and, as has been said, out of the living Word of God. . . . The commemoration takes place outwardly in the breaking of the bread of the Lord. The eating precedes; the commemoration and thanksgiving follow. He who has not eaten and had enough cannot truly give thanks."\*

The external rite, then, has primarily a didactic or demonstrative value.† "The broken bread teaches, explains, and represents the nature of the body of Christ that was given and broken for us."‡ Thus the external rite, though clearly subordinated to the inner mystery, nevertheless performs an important service.§

Obviously, therefore, the real question concerns the nature of this act of manducation|| typified in the outward ordinance. And here the significant fact is to be noted that, contrary to the prevailing views of the time, Schwenckfeld not only took his point of departure for the interpretation of the words of institution from the sixth chapter of the Gospel according to John, but made this discourse refer directly to the Lord's Supper as the fourth evangelist's contribution to our knowledge of the eucharist.¶ To him it was no accident that the most mystical of the New Testament writings contained the key to the solution of the problem of the festal "mysterium."\*\* There is indeed a corporeal or carnal eating of the physical bread itself; but there are no two ways—as Luther claimed

\* B 131a. Cf. the oft-repeated remark: " 'Das ist' gehet vor; 'das thut' folget."

† Schwenckfeld did not reject Zwingli's idea that the sacraments are badges of the Christian man's faith. But he had too little interest in the external significance of the rites to emphasize this merely professional value.

‡ A 399d, in the margin. Cf. Schenkel, *L.c.*, I, 560, n. 1, for the remarkably similar view of Servetus.

§ Cf. A 857b: "Es bringt gemeldete *Rememoratio* oder Wiedergedächtnis mit *Ruminationem et repetitionem omnium beneficiorum Christi. Ita saturatur fidelis anima et manducat corpus Christi pro se traditum et bibit sanguinem pro se effusum.*"

|| The term is also used synecdochically to include the "drinking of the blood" of Christ.

¶ Zwingli of course had insisted upon using this chapter as a guide; especially v. 63, "the flesh profiteth nothing"; but he did not suppose that the passage had a primary reference to the Supper. Cf. Baur, *Zwingli's Theologie*, II, pp. 296 sqq., 318, 592 et passim.

\*\* See the treatise, *Eine schöne und herrliche Auslegung über das ganze sechste Capitel Johannis von der Speise des ewigen Lebens*, especially pp. 126ff. (ed. 1595).



there are—in which the body of Christ can be eaten, a “spiritual” and a “sacramental” manducation. For, according to Schwenckfeld, the body of Christ is a purely spiritual food, and hence whether it be eaten in the sacrament or, as was possible, apart from these elements, the process must be a spiritual one.\* Wherever, then, the communicant by faith appropriates the spiritual realities present to the believers at the Lord’s table and typified by the sensible signs, he is eating the true bread of life, which is the flesh and blood of the Son of God. In effect, therefore, Schwenckfeld here concedes, with Zwingli and the Reformed theologians, that eating is a tropical expression for “believing.”† The larger question accordingly becomes the more precise one: What are the redemptive benefits which faith receives in the Gospel, whether with or without the use of the sacraments?

The answers are given in various terms. In the following passage, *e.g.*, the language approximates that commonly used to set forth the evangelical conception of the work of Christ: “Therein,” *i.e.*, in the body and blood of Christ, the Christian “receives nothing other than divine righteousness, grace, the Holy Ghost, forgiveness of sins, peace of conscience, and much spiritual joy continually in his heart. . . . He who receives the body of Christ through receives also the Spirit of Christ who keeps urging him unto an. . . .”‡ At other times, however, we have the peculiar indefiniteness of his mystical or physico-naturalistic conception: “He who eats the flesh of Christ partakes of the divine nature, flesh of flesh, bone of bone. He who eats the flesh of Christ eats life, that eternal life which begins in man here and preserves the soul from eternal death, so that this food will again produce the flesh of man, in a glory equal to that of the soul, at the final resurrection, and rescue and keep body and soul from eternal death.”§

\* Cf. B 140 *sq.* There is therefore no unique or special way of feeding upon Christ in the sacrament. The term “sacramental eating” must be equated either with the merely physical act of partaking of the eucharistic elements, or else—it is after all only a question of the absence or presence of faith—with that spiritual manducation which is, according to Schwenckfeld, the only possible way of feeding upon Christ’s “flesh.”

† Of course Calvin (*Institutio*, IV, c. XVII, 5; Allen’s translation, II, p. 529) regarded the eating rather as a “fruit and effect” or “consequence” of faith, though he admitted that the manducation can be by faith only. But the difference between Calvin’s personal views and those of the Reformed symbols on this point is a negligible quantity.

‡ A 331.

§ *Auslegung des sechsten Capitels Joh.*, p. 175. Luther himself had taught that a physical or magical benefit might be derived from the eucharistic meal to insure





It is possible, however, to obtain more specific answers than either of these to the question concerning the blessings received by faith, whether in the use of the Supper or not. Our limits forbid a full discussion of Schwenckfeld's soteriology, but it is necessary to set forth at least the general principles of the subject as they bear upon the point in controversy.

We must revert to the basal fact of the two so diverse estates in which the Saviour performs his mediatorial services; in other words, the central importance of the resurrection of Christ must be clearly apprehended.\* The earthly work of Jesus is to be regarded as the basis and the preparation for his heavenly work. The former is to be designated as the work of acquiring, and the latter as the work of distributing, the redemptive blessings.† All grace is therefore now to be found in the risen and glorified Christ. Sometimes, indeed, this thought is presented in a way which apparently robs the objective atonement of its intrinsic value, or which, to speak more positively and at the same time to relate the fact to his philosophic presuppositions, apparently transmutes the physical reality of the Redeemer's body into a spiritual substance to be mediated to the believer by the Holy Spirit.‡ Ordinarily, however, the work of Jesus on earth is regarded rather as a preparation for his more important service in heaven as "the ruling King of grace." The centre of Schwenckfeld's system of thought must unquestionably be found in the mediatorial work of the exalted, *i.e.*, the completely deified God-man.§ From this point of view the Gospel message

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the bodily resurrection at the last day. Cf. Thümme, *Neue Kirchliche Zeitschrift*, 1901, p. 890. But in his later treatises this consideration was not dwelt upon, a point which Müller emphasizes in his endeavor to approximate the teachings of Luther on this question to those of Calvin (see his *Dogmatische Abhandlungen*, p. 417).

\* On this general subject, see D 239 *sq.*, 465 *sq.*, 507, 527, 825 *sq.*

† For the proofs we may refer to the admirable section, "De opere Christi," in Hahn, *l.c.*, pp. 52ff. Besides the passages there cited, see D 103, A 694, 861, and B 591. Luther had early developed the same mode of representation. See his *Wider die himmlischen Propheten*, St. Louis edition, XX, col. 275: "Von der Vergebung der Sünden handeln wir auf zwei Weisen: einmal wie sie erlangt und erworben ist, das andermal wie sie ausgetheilt und geschenkt wird."

‡ Cf. A 696c, C 943d.

§ Schwenckfeld's emphasis upon the post-resurrection activities of the Lord contained many a corrective suggestion for the one-sided treatment that Luther, in the interests of his forensic justification, was prone to accord to the earthly life of the Saviour. Schwenckfeld made much of the two texts: "Jesus our Lord . . . who was delivered up for our trespasses and was raised for our justification" (Rom. iv. 25), and "Wherefore we henceforth know no man after the flesh: even though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know him so no more" (2 Cor. v. 16). On the common perversion of this last text by mystical interpreters, see Inge, *Christian Mysticism*, p. 69 *sq.*



is represented as being composed of two unequal but vitally connected portions. There is the milk for babes and the strong meat for adults; there is the word of the cross, and there is the word of life. "The sum of the Gospel is in the Word of the cross and the Word of life. By the Word of the cross is understood the entire mystery of the crucified Christ and the entire transaction of all that which Christ the eternal Son of God became for our sakes, that he accomplished, earned, and effected by the bitter death of the cross, namely, his salvation, reconciliation, self-sacrifice, and satisfaction for sin and the forgiveness of the same; while the Word of life denotes the whole mystery of the glorified Christ and eternal life, the whole work of our justification and salvation, and all that Christ after his ascension to heaven and entrance into the kingdom of God effects in believers through the Holy Ghost, and how he after accomplishing our salvation upon the cross now brings us to his heavenly kingdom unto eternal salvation."\*

It is obvious from the passage just cited that Schwenckfeld infused a new meaning into some of the formulas employed to designate the blessings of the Gospel. The peculiarities of his system, from this point of view, may be briefly indicated by referring to his statements concerning the three specific terms, redemption (*Erlösung*), regeneration (*Wiedergeburt*), and justification (*Gerechtung*).†

Redemption is primarily, as in the early patristic conception, a deliverance from the power of Satan. By his death on the cross Christ overcame the archfiend of the human race,‡ and by his resurrection he made it possible that man, having been freed from the dominion of the devil, should become positively capable of triumphing over his foes by virtue of a gradual deliverance from the estate of creaturehood itself.§

This last phase of redemption, however, belongs rather to the specific doctrine of regeneration. And here, even more than in the case of the somewhat negative consideration of our being "bought off" from Satan by the ransom of the divine King's life,

\* D 348 *sqq.* Concerning the terms "milk" and "strong food," and concerning the insufficiency of the former, which signified only a historical knowledge of Christ, and the absolutely indispensable character of the latter for the truly "spiritual knowledge" of Christ, see C 898, D 286 *sq.*, 587 *sqq.*, 895 *sqq.*, A 471-476.

† In what immediately follows we are drawing from Hahn, *op. cit.*, 51 *sqq.*, who has with admirable clearness, brevity and accuracy reproduced Schwenckfeld's soteriological principles.

‡ A 716c, D 435, 463, 742f. Cf. Baur, *Lehre von der Versöhnung*, p. 462n.

§ D 467 *sq.*



the emphasis must be placed upon the distributing, as distinguished from the acquiring, activity of the Redeemer, *i.e.*, upon his heavenly as distinguished from his earthly work. The act of regeneration or "re-creation," whereby the believer receives the divine principle of the spiritual life, is the beginning of the saving process on its subjective side. It would be easy, of course, to cite passages which, taken apart from their contexts and from the philosophic presuppositions upon which they are based, would appear to be in fair harmony with the general evangelical or Protestant view of his opponents concerning the initial act in the salvation of man. The following is a typical deliverance of this sort: "Thus regeneration is an incipient work of God, which he of his pure grace and mercy performs without any merit on our part in dead, corrupt man for his quickening, righteousness, and salvation; in which work God the merciful awakens man from spiritual death through his living Word, Jesus Christ, changes the old nature with a heavenly newness, converts the sinner, begets for himself children and heirs of his kingdom; in which he also grants ears to hear, eyes to see, and an open heart to understand, and through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit makes the evil and unrighteous man pious, holy, and righteous."\* But the rationale of this regenerative process clearly evinces the extent to which Schwenckfeld compromised his biblical formulas with his spiritualistic principles. This will become the more evident when we interrogate him on the question which, as we have seen, was for him, no less than for Luther, central in the practical religious life of that day—the question of "justification by faith." For it was precisely in his conception of both "justification" and "faith" that Schwenckfeld developed to their logical consequences the essentially "mystical" principles of his system.

To be sure, he sought here as elsewhere to defend himself against the logic of his novel assertions. Therefore, on the one hand, he rejected altogether the Romish idea of meritorious works,† and, on the other, he sought to concede as much as possible to Luther's doctrine of forensic justification. He made much of the passion and death of Christ as the only ground of our reconciliation with God. Such language as the following is by no means exceptional: "This indeed is the joy of our hearts, that if we in faith think of his satisfaction, our consciences are quieted and put at ease. And to

\* D 606a. Cf. the whole section, *Was ist denn eigentlich die Wiedergeburt? und wobei soll sie erkannt werden?*

† See, e.g., D 653, 657.



celebrate the Lord's Supper, to eat and drink his blood, signifies the awakening of the believing hearts by the Spirit, so that they perceive the benefits of Christ, remember, inwardly experience, and consider them, and with hearty thanks put his wounds upon their wounded souls and consciences as a salutary plaster."\* The blood of Christ is the pledge of our redemption.† The Saviour died, the just for the unjust, having become a curse for us.‡ It is therefore an erroneous representation which declares that Schwenckfeld absolutely denied the imputed righteousness of Christ.§ The following citation may serve to show how freely Schwenckfeld could use the orthodox phrases: "The righteousness of God is nothing but the perceiving, grasping, and appropriating of such grace in Christ through faith. . . . Only that grace purifies by which our sins are not imputed to us."||

But if Schwenckfeld did not in practice deny imputed righteousness to the believing sinner, yet in theory, that is by the logic of his system, he was compelled to do so. The historical situation had here, too, done its part to force him into an extreme position where, in spite of his good intentions, he could not maintain himself in harmony with the Protestant leaders.¶ In his eagerness to

\* A 379b; cf. A 243, 269.

† A 301b, D 460. To be quite accurate, however, it must be added that the bloodshedding is always to be followed by the "spiritual" effusion of the Lord's blood in his heavenly activities. Cf. D 102 *sqq.*, 287, and C 943. 44b, 301a, 289d.

‡ *ibid.*, e.g. (*Lehre von der Versöhnung*, p. 462), says Schwenckfeld substituted essential for imputed righteousness. Ritschl (*Rechtfertigung u. Versöhnung*, I<sup>3</sup>, p. 319) likewise asserts, "dass Schwenckfeld von einer angerechneten Gerechtigkeit nichts wissen wollte." But Hahn, *l.c.*, pp. 61ff., gives a more accurate statement. In strict consistency Schwenckfeld *ought* to have denied all imputed righteousness; but all attempts thus to measure him by the test of other fixed systems of theological opinion are sure to do the reformer injustice by failing to take account of some minor yet most highly characteristic and therefore important details. Consider, e.g., the following statement, quoted by Hahn from A 283: "Siehe Röm. 14; was unsere Gerechtigkeit sei, und dass der allein gerecht ist, welchem um des Glaubens Christi willen seine Sünden nicht werden zugerechnet. Christo wurden unsere Sünden zugerechnet, da er für uns am Kreuz eine Malediction ward, des geniessen wir noch heute." Dorner (*Geschichte d. prot. Theologie*, p. 178) gives a characteristically fair judgment: "!benso will er zwar Christi Leiden ganz und gar mit der Kirche seine versöhnende Bedeutung lassen; aber erinnert, dass man nicht scheiden dürfe zwischen Christi Person und Verdienst."

|| A 8. Cf. Scheukel, *Das Wesen*, etc., II, 287.

¶ Cf. Erbkam, *Geschichte d. prot. Sekten*, pp. 437 *sqq.*, for a criticism of the popular Lutheran conception of justification by faith. There can be no doubt that much occasion for offense was given by the new "indulgences" to be obtained from unworthy Lutheran pastors in connection with the administration of the Lord's Supper. Cf. A 411b, and Döllinger, *Die Reformation*, I, 257ff.





magnify the grace of Christ as against all religious externalities, and especially because of his zeal for the fruits of faith in holy living, he not only widened the idea of justification so as to make it include sanctification, but also, as we shall have occasion presently to observe, deepened the conception of faith so as to make it a substantial, we may even say a physico-spiritual, bond between the righteous God and the sinful soul. We read: "In fine, we are assured by Holy Scripture, thanks be to God, that *justificatio* in Paul denotes a making righteous; *justificare*, to make righteous; and *justitia Dei*, the righteousness of God, that is, the goodness and godliness of the faithful God, which he here imparts to his elect by faith through Christ in the Holy Spirit."\* Once more all stress is laid upon the mediatorial reign of Christ in his exaltation and glory. In fact the primary difference between his and the orthodox view of justification concerns the basis or ground, rather than the mere extent, of this act, or, as he would prefer to say, this work. "And in short we must not seek our becoming righteous and our righteousness in Christ according to his (earthly) estate in a purely historical manner, but according to his other estate, wherein he has now been glorified and eternally equipped and appointed by God the Father to be the dispenser of the heavenly blessings and the head of the Church."† Schwenckfeld at times bravely endeavored to preserve the truth of the forensic conception and its correlate, the doctrine of an imputed righteousness, yet the logic of his system, the consequence of his central idea of the deification of Christ's flesh as the indispensable bond of union between the creature and the holy Creator, compelled him to admit: "God considers no one righteous in whom there is nothing at all of his essential righteousness."‡ While, therefore, he had a profoundly ethical view of sin and of the need of its expiation, he was yet more concerned for the subjective appropriation of divine grace than for the merely objective and forensic act whereby, according to his opponents, guilt is remitted and a title to eternal life is granted to the believer.§

\* D 484f. For Schwenckfeld's conception of faith, see pp. 69 *sqq.*

† D 485. Cf. Hahn, *l.c.*, p. 64: "Itaque solum glorificatum Christum putavit justificationis nostrae fundamentum." On the similarity in this and other respects between Schwenckfeld and Osiander, as well as for the differences between the two, see Hahn, *ibid.*, pp. 63-70; Erbkam, *l.c.*, p. 443; Baur, *Lehre von der Versöhnung*, pp. 326ff., 340ff.; and Schwenckfeld, C 942 *sq.* ‡ A 812c.

§ It is perfectly in accord with the facts, therefore, when Hahn (*l.c.*, p. 55, n. 3) and Ritschl (*Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung*, I, p. 318) declare that the idea of expiation is one that does not harmonize with Schwenckfeld's mystical principles. He retained the current biblical formulas, but infused into them a characteristic physico-spiritual content.



It is not necessary for our purpose to dwell upon the subsidiary features of Schwenckfeld's conception of the nature of justification. He has often been accused of reverting to Catholicism in his discussion of the need and importance of good works. But the charge is ill founded. He was neither a legalist nor a perfectionist. Such was his conviction of the estrangement between the creature and the Creator that even the regenerated soul can do nothing to merit the divine favor, nor can it ever in this life reach a point where it is absolutely free from the defilement and bondage of sin. In these matters, indeed, Schwenckfeld may be said to have equaled any of his contemporaries in sobriety of judgment and keenness of insight into the biblical data concerning the relations of faith and works.\* He therefore did not purpose to deny the orthodox doctrines of the imputed righteousness and the vicariousness of Christ's death, nor had he any desire, with his emphasis on the need of holy living, to countenance the Romish idea of the meritorious character of good works. The fact is that he simply used the term justification, as Luther himself had done,† in the double sense of declaring and making righteous; but that, in accordance with his spiritualistic tendency, he laid primary stress upon the latter factor. In short, he widened the application of the word to the whole process of salvation, including that which to him was the basal consideration, the redemption from creaturehood itself. Sanctification is only another name for the same gradual transformation.‡

\* Cf. the verdict of Schenkel, *Das Wesen des Prot.*, II, 520. It is true that Schwenckfeld speaks much of the rewards of Christian service, but, on the other hand, no reformer recognized more clearly than he did the all-sufficiency and the absolutely exclusive merit of the Redeemer's work. Even our own good deeds are in reality nothing but the manifestations of the life of God within the soul. Christ is himself the merit of our good works. See *The Threefold Life of Man*, Anspach's Translation, Ch. XXX, p. 111, "How the Word, the Reward and Merit of Good Works are to be properly adjudged and understood." The *Formula Concordiæ* (*Epitome*, Art. XII; in Schaff, *Creeds*, etc., III, p. 178) clearly reveals the influence of Schwenckfeld's antagonists, Andrea and Flacius, when it represents him as saying: "Quod homo pius, vere per Spiritum Dei regeneratus, legem Dei in hac vita perfecte servare et implere valeat." Kurtz, *l.c.*, p. 150, repeats the unjust charge. It is true that Schwenckfeld made much of the text, "Whoso abideth in him sinneth not" (1 John iii. 5), and delighted in the paradox, "Christians have sin, yet sin not" (*e.g.*, A 209a); but the context always explains such declarations in harmony with the constantly recurring principle: "We never live without sin before God" (A 379a). Even Planck, accordingly, charges the Lutheran divines with chicanery and falsehood in this matter (*Geschichte der Entstehung*, etc., Vol. V, 1, p. 221).

† Cf. Loofs, *Dogmengeschichte*, p. 351 sqq., and Otto, *Anschauung vom heiligen Geiste bei Luther*, p. 27f.

‡ Cf. D 725c, in margin: "Die Justificatio ist nicht allein Vergebung der Sünden, sondern auch die Heiligung und Erneuerung des innerlichen Menschen."



Indeed, even the more restricted term "pardon" is likewise stretched far beyond its usual limits,\* and made to designate the actual removal of the sins and even the totality of redemptive blessings.

It is plain, then, that the characteristic features of Schwenckfeld's conception of the mode of salvation, and therefore also of the nature of the benefits to be derived from a right use of the sacramental Supper, must be sought, not so much in his polemic statements against his opponents—for he largely used their own and the biblical formulas—as in the elaboration of his positive views concerning the very essence of Christianity. We do not come to the heart of the matter, therefore, until, regardless of his frequent attempts to harmonize his speculations with the more usual interpretations of Scripture then in vogue, we fully apprehend the essentially mystical or magical mode in which he conceived the process of salvation. Along the periphery of his theologizing, to be sure, he ever took pains to avoid the extremes of the more radical subjectivism of that day, and even at the expense of self-consistency he strove, as we have seen, to take more thoroughly conservative views of the Word, of the Church, and of the Sacraments than his philosophic presuppositions strictly warranted. But at the centre and core of his system of thought, and in the very heart of his practical piety, he reveals the characteristics of a genuine Protestant mysticism. It is necessary, in conclusion, therefore, to ascertain the precise nature of the causes that made him take, so far as the question of the sacred Supper is concerned, the mediating and unstable, because not strictly logical, position he assumed. We have still to learn the deepest meaning of the correlative terms "justification" and "faith."

It cannot be too sharply emphasized, then, that however diligently Schwenckfeld strove to get scriptural warrant for his views and to accommodate himself to the new formulas of the Protestant theology, he taught an essentially physico-spiritual salvation, in which the communication of the divine life as a substantive principle must be magically effected.

\* D 921d, 922: "Was ist aber Vergebung der Sünden für ein Ding? Antwort: es ist nicht allein ein Nichtzurechnung der Sünden . . . nicht allein eine gnädige, barmherzige Nachlassung der Strafe Gottes, so wir durch die Sünde und Ungehorsam vor Gott wohl verschuldet haben; sondern es ist auch ein Töten, Abtilgen, und Hinnehmen der Sünden vom Herzen und Gewissen . . . Da ist die Sünde mit ihrer Klage tod, ja vor Gott hinweg und abgetilgt, das Herz ist gereinigt, und zur Einwohnung der heiligen Dreifaltigkeit zubereitet, dass auch der Mensch, der in Christo bleibet, alsdann weder den ewigen Tod, der Sünden Sold ist, noch das höllische Feuer, welches ihre Strafe ist, nicht mehr darf fürchten."



In spite of all that has been said, therefore, to show that he in explicit terms admitted the traditional views concerning the vicarious atonement as a basis for the imputation of Christ's righteousness, we must be prepared to find a disturbing stress laid upon the inward subjective appropriation of the divine-human essence of the Redeemer himself. The Word must become "spirit-flesh" in every believer. "It is therefore not enough that we believe that the Word has become flesh, but we must also believe that it still for Christ's sake becomes flesh. I repeat, we must know not only that Jesus Christ then came into the flesh, but that even to-day he by reason of his holy and glorified flesh comes into all other flesh which receives him in faith, and that he regenerates this, leads it by the Spirit, and makes it a child of God."\* Christ, then, is to be born and fashioned anew in every soul that is to be redeemed. But this language is for Schwenckfeld no mere metaphor. Such is his conception of salvation, that the whole process appears as a realistic transformation of the natural man, body and soul, into an ever-increasing likeness to the deified humanity of Christ, the goal being such a participation in the divine essence that the sinner himself is divinized.†

The details of the process are worked out with more or less ingenuity in the adaptation of the theory to the biblical data. The

\* A 517b. Cf. the marginal caption, "Wie das Wort noch heute in den Gläubigen geistliches Fleisch werde."

† Such at least is the obvious import of the strong language sometimes employed. Cf. D 142: "So könnten sie [his Lutheran opponents] aus der Gnaden Gottes, auch mit der Schrift Zeugnis, den allerteuersten Wechsel bald finden, dass Gott drum sei Mensch worden, auf das der Mensch wiederum Gott würde in Christo unserm Herrn." Cf. the phrase in D 856c, "je länger je mehr vergottet." It must immediately be added, however, that Schwenckfeld did not purpose to be a pantheist. His conception of God is too personal, too ethical, to permit such an interpretation. He reveals even in the immediate contexts of such passages as we have just referred to his fundamentally practical and moral aim: "vergottet," after all, means only "geistlich und heil gemacht zur völligen Gesundheit." We have here another illustration of the danger of magnifying the speculative at the expense of the religious and ethical element in Schwenckfeld. Philosophically, indeed, he may be said to overcome his dualism by pantheistically transcending it. But in the adjustment of his basal principles to his biblical exegesis he resolutely avoids the unethical conclusions to which his speculations would lead. He made much of St. Peter's phrase concerning our becoming "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter i. 4), but he had just as little intention as the apostle had of countenancing pantheism. The most that can be said against him, from this point of view, is that he at times used forms of speech which, if not construed in the light of his considerations for the practical religious life, would inevitably lead to pantheism. Cf. A 286d, where he explicitly attacks Sebastian Franck's genuinely pantheistic utterances concerning the indwelling of the Word of God, the divine seed, in all men.





first stage of the development is that whereby "Christ is conceived and born in us by faith."\* This is the beginning of the Christian experience, the dawn in the heart of the spiritual light necessary to apprehend the Redeemer in his true worth. This he also designates the "regeneration" of the sinner, which, it will be remembered, he made to consist of a supernatural or creative act, whereby the principle of sonship is implanted in the creature in order, by a process of inner transformation, to bring him completely into the estate of grace. The second stage is that of conformity to Christ, "which the Holy Spirit by faith effects in the members of his body, and it is the whole life of Christ in the flesh, with his doctrine, miracles, and benefits, . . . so that Christ becomes strong in us, and we more and more faithfully follow him in his walk and life by means of the proffered grace." The third stage pertains to the "crucifixion of Christ in us," which is to be understood both of the trials and hardships imposed upon the Christians by the world and of the never-ceasing warfare between the flesh and the Spirit. The fourth stage, "that Christ is buried in us," constitutes the victory of the Spirit over the world and the flesh and the devil.† The fifth stage is the resurrection of Christ within us, when he fully triumphs in our lives and renders it impossible for us to be permanently estranged from the Lord.‡ The sixth stage, that of the "ascension of Christ within us," denotes the continual upward drawing of the heart to the affairs of its heavenly citizenship. The final or seventh stage is "that Christ in us sits at the right hand of his heavenly Father." Here "man often learns more in one hour, when he is drawn rapturously to this point, than otherwise in much time; here we only begin to know the glory, honor, might and power of the man, yea of the flesh of Jesus Christ according to the Spirit, through which merit and glory all these gifts are granted to our poor flesh."

It may be supposed that this is but pictorial language, to set forth with realistic force the sinner's need of apprehending the whole objective work of Christ, from its first inception in the incarnation itself to its unending activity in the mediatorial reign in the kingdom of heaven. And doubtless in many passages that speak of the indwelling and informing Christ the writer meant no more

\* In what immediately follows we draw from the chief passage on the subject, B 522-532, *Vom Geheimnis der ganzen Ausföhrung Christi, wie unser Fleisch aus Gnaden mit ihm in eine Gemeinschaft komme.*

† The more accurate designation, "our being buried in Christ," is also used.

‡ In this connection the fact is emphasized that, so far as the time element is concerned, the various stages may follow one another in quick succession or after long intervals.



than Christians have ever understood by those terms, which identify the life-process itself in the redeemed soul with Christ, its author, its object, and its end. But, as a rule, there is something deeper, something more substantial, something genuinely mystical embodied in these fanciful formulas. More and more the Christian is dominated by the life which, emanating in a concrete manner from the deified flesh of the Redeemer, implants its essential principle in the sinner. The substance of God himself is communicated from the glorified humanity of Christ.\*

The practical question for us in this connection, therefore, is that concerning the mode in which these physico-spiritual blessings are conferred upon the Christian in the Supper. The answer is the thoroughly conventional one, that the bestowal and reception of grace, whether in the sacraments or apart from them, is all a matter of faith. Manifestly, then, Schwenckfeld ought to give a scientific vindication of faith as the instrument whereby the soul receives her spiritual gifts. But this is precisely where he utterly fails to bring his philosophic presuppositions into harmony with the practical exigencies of his religious teaching. Faith is to serve, as we have seen, as the nexus between the outer ceremonial rite and the inward or truly sacramental transaction. But what dialectic connection is effected by the use of this pre-eminently scriptural term? How does faith, coming to the Lord's table, receive from the consecrated elements a spiritual gift? Or, once more to reduce the matter to the largest common denominator, how does faith ever appropriate Christ?

The problem, by reason of its practical importance, often pressed itself upon the reformer's attention. But his laborious efforts toward its solution amount in effect only to an ingenious *petitio principii*. The central significance of this Christian virtue of faith is, indeed, clearly apprehended; but there is no satisfactory explanation of the function which, according to the logic of his system, faith must needs perform. Never having fully grasped that profoundly religious and ethical conception of the term which

\* Cf. A 627d, where the "göttlich, geistlich Wesen" acquired by Christ after his resurrection is represented as being imparted to the believer at the beginning of his life of faith. A 831b even speaks of Christians becoming gods by virtue of the fullness of the divine life implanted in them. In D 379a, Schwenckfeld speaks of the virtues of the Christian character as being, "in a measure and in part, by grace, that which God is naturally, and in the totality, and in perfect fullness." The biblical "indwelling of the Spirit" is made to signify a deification of the human soul or its participation in the divine essence (*ibid.*).



his spiritual father Luther had acquired in the course of an extraordinary experience of the grace of God, Schwenckfeld, in his zeal to refute what was after all only a caricature of the evangelical view of faith, succumbed to the temptation of going to the opposite extreme of fairly annihilating the ethical and religious factors in the process of salvation. Nothing indeed was farther from his deliberate intention: his conceptions of God and man, of holiness and sin, reveal a sufficiently clear apprehension of the moral quality pertaining to freedom of choice. But his theory of the nature and function of the concrete, physico-spiritual substance of the deified flesh of Christ had such a determining influence upon his speculations that, in spite of his efforts to cast his thought into biblical moulds, and in spite of his meritorious services in criticising the ethical shortcomings of misunderstood and misapplied evangelicalism, he himself could not, except by occasionally departing from his own premises in the interests of his ardent piety, vindicate for personal faith a genuinely religious and ethical significance. His "spiritual" knowledge of Christ is after all no real knowledge: it is at best a consciousness, a feeling; it cannot, or at least it does not, establish its claims by any dialectic addressed to reason. In his own case, indeed, his "faith" worked beautifully by love; it filled the heart of the persecuted man with the holy confidence and gladness that inspired the noble motto, "*Nil triste, Christo recepto.*" Above all ascetic weakness, he took a serious yet thoroughly sane view of the things of time and sense; free likewise from the ecstatic elations of the professed mystic, he yet hoped intently for the blessed consummation of the heavenly kingdom. But his faith, real, ardent, mighty as it must have been in his own experience, could not give any rational account of the high prerogatives it claimed for itself. It was somehow to serve as the means whereby the soul must come into the possession of her spiritual treasures; but in the confessedly difficult subject of the psychology of faith he found it impossible, in spite of his numerous biblical citations, to remove or conceal his dialectic embarrassment. A few passages from his works will show the magnitude of his difficulty.

He never wearies of imputing to his opponents a purely "historic" or rationalistic, as distinguished from a "true" or "spiritual," faith. "The Lutherans," we are told, have a historical Christ whom they know according to the letter, according to the events of his life, his teachings, miracles, and deeds, not as he to-day lives and works; just as they have a historical rationalistic faith (*Verunftglauben*) and a historical justification, which they base upon



the promises, no matter to whom they belong.\* He insists that his critics make too marked a separation between their creed and their conduct.† They have only the faith that may come from a knowledge of the letter of Scripture, not the faith that comes only from the hearing of the inner Word.‡ They fail to realize the difference between a dead faith and a vitalizing knowledge of the Redeemer. They look too much to mere ceremonial rites, and not enough to Christ the "ruling King of grace."§

But if it is only just to make some concessions to Schwenckfeld so far as his general criticism of his opponents is concerned, his own positive or constructive views of faith are altogether unsatisfactory. For we must not permit ourselves to be deceived by the apparent scripturalness of his statements that faith is a gift, and that as such it is mediated to the sinful soul directly by the divine-human Redeemer. Schwenckfeld gives these assertions a far different significance from that ordinarily connected with them. To him faith is a real, substantive principle. It is, in a word, a portion of the very being of God. "Now therefore true faith is a gift of God, a present of the Holy Spirit. It is fundamentally (*im Grunde*) one essence with him who gives and presents it; a co-partner (*Mitgenosse*) with him who does and works all things; a beam of the eternal sun. It is a little spark of that burning fire which is God himself."|| It is a part of that which in its fullness exists in God only.¶ "It is a seion or plant of the divine righteousness, essentially implanted and established in the heart of man."\*\* "It is,"

\* A 812.

† *Ibid.*

‡ See, e.g., D 637 sqq., C 462, A 421-4.

§ B 638 sq.

|| A 814ed. Cf. the equally striking statement in A 420: "Daher kommt der wahre gerechtmachende christliche Glaube aus Gottes Natur, Selbstand und Wesen, wie er denn vor Anfang der Welt samt andern geistlichen Gaben in Gott verborgen."

¶ Cf. D 379. The analogy of the sun shedding its beams without diminishing itself is here repeated. The margin, to be sure, would guard against our speaking of a *particula solis* in case of the radiating beams. But the illustration itself, and the other statements on the subject, make it plain that faith must, as the logic of his system requires, be conceived as a substantive, a physico-spiritual principle. How closely Luther approximated such statements may be seen in Hering, *Luthers Mystik*, pp. 97 sqq., 170 sq.; and cf. Dorner, *Lehre von der Person Christi*, p. 631, n. 1. Schenkel, *l.c.*, II, p. 440, compares Schwenckfeld in this respect with Servetus and Osiander.

\*\* D 380d.





to revert to the favorite mode of representation, "a stream and radiance of the heavenly light and fire which is God himself."\*

These passages will abundantly have shown how impersonal is Schwenckfeld's conception of faith. It seems at times to be nothing but an ethereal substance emanating from the spirit-flesh of the glorified Christ. It is produced in an altogether one-sided and magical manner by a divine causality, there being logically no place left for the free act of a moral agent. Man indeed, strictly speaking, cannot believe. He is to wait in a state of passivity until the implanting of the divine life has been effected; faith in its first stage is identified with regeneration. The strong emphasis laid upon the uselessness of "means of grace"—it will be remembered, however, that here too the practice did not quite keep pace with the theory—only made the whole process of salvation appear altogether suprarational.† To be sure, the theory admirably served the one purpose the author had in mind: the presence of such a faith fills the heart with unmistakable signs of its presence; the beam reveals itself by its own light and warms by its own ardor. Himself not given to ecstatic excesses, he at least left the door wide open for the vagaries of a genuinely mystical subjectivism. If he himself was saved from a more radical spiritualism by his vigorous and well-controlled religious life which expressed itself in the normal channels of service, his theory of the mode of salvation cannot fairly be said to do justice to the ethical needs of men. With all his objections, therefore, to the Lutheran and Reformed doctrine of pre-

\* D 634d. Cf. also A 517, C 280d, D 145a. It was such mystical language that led Mat. Flacius to say of Schwenckfeld (see the *Verlegung der kurzen Antwort des Schwenckfeldt*, 1554, p. Ciii): "Was ist er aber für ein toller Heiliger, dem das Wort Gottes das Wesen Gottes selbst ist, das Evangelium ist ihm das Wesen Gottes, der Glaube ist ihm das Wesen Gottes, unsere Erneuerung ist ihm das Wesen Gottes, unsere Gerechtigkeit vor Gott ist ihm das Wesen Gottes. Alle Gaben des heiligen Geistes sind ihm das Wesen Gottes." We are prepared to realize how much in this representation is true and how much is a caricature of the truth. It would be easy to treat many another doctrine of Schwenckfeld in this fashion. At the same time it must be admitted that there is no other point so openly vulnerable in his system as his conception of the office of faith. Here the practical religious interests that ordinarily held him back from the logical extremity of his principles did not, and could not, preserve for his mysticism a truly ethical significance.

† Cf. the passage C 372: "Wer von aussen ein und durch das Äussere in das Innere will kommen, der versteht nicht den Gnadenlauf. . . . Der Mensch muss alles vergessen und fallen lassen und zu dem Einsprechen der Gnaden und aller Dinge ledig gelassen und allen Creaturen genommen sein, gänzlich Gott ergeben. . . . Deswegen ist der Gnaden und des heiligen Geistes einiger Schlitt und Mittel, darauf er in die stille Seele rutscht, sein allmächtiges ewiges Wort, so ohne Mittel von dem Mund Gottes ausgeht."



destination,\* he can do no more for the sinner than to point him to a faith which is essentially an implanting of the divine substance, an altogether impersonal and unintelligible act so far as the beneficiary is concerned. Here, then, the two extremes meet—that which he regarded as the one-sided externalism of the Lutheran movement and that to which, with the protest of his mystical piety against all religious deadness and all mechanical ecclesiasticism, he himself went when he made faith a concrete ingrafting into the heart of the substantive principle of divinity. In the one case, as in the other, the ethical needs of the believer were jeopardized; but whereas in Lutheranism it was the practice that failed to maintain itself on the high level of the evangelical theory, in Schwenckfeld the defective theory of faith was wisely overruled in practice by a consideration for the religious welfare of the believer. And just as Luther, in his doctrine concerning the mode in which sacramental blessings are conferred, made the physical organ of the mouth the channel for the transmission of a spiritual benefit, so Schwenckfeld converted faith, a strictly spiritual act, into a vehicle for the transmission of a hyperphysical substance which none the less must somehow influence the body as well as the soul.

A practical illustration of the difficulty in which Schwenckfeld's theory of faith involved his whole system may be found in his views on the subject of the salvation of the Old Testament saints.

From all that has been said it would appear that no person living before the time of the incarnation, *i.e.*, before this mystical or hyperphysical flesh of Christ came into existence, could feed his soul upon the true bread of life, which, as we have seen, is nothing other than the flesh and blood of the Son of man. And this is precisely how some of the interpreters have represented the matter. Planck, for example, declares that Schwenckfeld explicitly taught that under the old economy no one was or could be saved.†

There can be no doubt that Schwenckfeld refused to place the ceremonial rites of the Old upon the same plane with the sacraments of the New Testament. The latter not only signify or symbolize the spiritual blessings, but they actually convey them.‡ The two dispensations are generically different in that the Old consists in "ex-

\* See, *e.g.*, D 398ff., 412ff., 420ff.

† *Geschichte d. Entstehung*, etc., V, B. IV, pp. 119, 189, 192 *sq.* Dr. Hodge, *System. Theol.*, II, 587, was probably following Planck in declaring: "In a Send-brief written in 1532, in which he treats of the difference between the Old and New Testament economies, he says that under the former there was no saving faith, and no justification, and that all the patriarchs had therefore perished forever"

‡ A 510.



ternal divine service, promises, carnal justifications and external holiness, and is a shadow of the heavenly blessings"; whereas the New consists in the "spiritual, true justification through the blood of Jesus Christ."\* Baptism is therefore not a Jewish cleansing.† He finds fault with Calvin, Bullinger and others for not making a sufficiently broad distinction between the two covenants.‡

The fact is, however, that Schwenckfeld unequivocally taught the salvation of all Old Testament worthies, and that too according to the same principles that obtain in the new dispensation, that is by "faith" in the divine-human Mediator. To be sure, one loose-jointed sentence in the chief letter on the subject seems to militate against this assertion: "That in short no person before Christ entered heaven, or was able to receive salvation; that all holy fathers, patriarchs and prophets hoped in and waited for Christ, and by faith in the promises were preserved in Abraham's bosom." But not only does the margin rightly give the gist of the passage, "that no person has been able to enter the divine glory without the suffering of Christ," but the letter repeatedly states, what is likewise the uniform representation elsewhere, that the patriarchs became participants in the merits of Christ's saving work.§

But of course the real question, again, is not whether Schwenckfeld at times taught the salvation of the Old Testament saints, but whether he could with logical consistency take this view of the problem. Must we not in this case also find his explicit statements conflicting with the basal principles of his philosophy and theology?

\* B 593b.

† B, Part I, p. 112ff. Cf. the entire third letter: "Darin bewiesen wird dass die Sacramente Christi nicht aus dem Gesetz Mosi genommen noch den Ceremonien oder Sacramenten des alten Testaments mögen verglichen werden."

‡ C 521d. Cf. Kahnis, *Die Lehre vom Abendmahl*, p. 462.

§ A p. 57 speaks of faith's bringing Christ into the heart and effecting "one sort of forgiveness of sins, grace and salvation in all saints," "whether at the beginning, middle or end of the world." Cf. also p. 58b: "Drum so ist deshalb kein Unterschied zwischen den gläubigen Vätern im alten Testament und zwischen uns die wir glauben." The difference, therefore, to which attention is called in the text, does not concern the fate of true believers under the two covenants, but rather the institutions, the sacraments and, in a word, the genius of the two covenants themselves. In the former, no less than in the latter, there was true "feeding upon Christ." "Also haben nun die Jünger Christi"—he means the disciples at the time of the institution of the Supper, i.e., before the glorification of the Redeemer's body—"ja, auch alle Väter den Leib und Blut Christi gegessen durch den Glauben, sowohl als ihn noch heute alle Gläubigen in des Herrn Nacht-mal essen und damit gespeiset und zum ewigen Leben genährt und gesättigt werden." Cf. the treatise, *Auslegung des Evang. Luce XIV, Vom Abendmahl des Herrn*, pp. H iii sqq.: "Dass der Herr Christus auch mit allen Gläubigen von Anbeginn der Welt sein Abendmahl hat gehalten."



The solution is attempted from two opposite sides: either faith is rationalized so that it is no longer a hyperphysical substance identical with the divine essence, or else the conception of salvation is modified so that the Old Testament believers were the subjects of a generically different redemption during their sojourn on earth. Sometimes, indeed, the difficulty is simply evaded, when, *e.g.*, the term "faith" is given the further capacity of having no necessary temporal or earthly relationship whatsoever. "The nourishing," that is of the faithful before Christ's birth, "is before God beyond all time (*aus aller Zeit*) and consists *in coelestibus*, in the heavenly divine essence, and takes place in this world only through a true living faith."\* Schwenckfeld made much in this connection of such formulas as "the Lamb that hath been slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. xiii. 8). But there is here no real grappling with the problem as to how spiritual blessings were mediated in the Old economy. It is, moreover, a characteristic of genuine mysticism thus to unite God and the soul without any dialectic means. Regardless of the assertion, therefore, that the faith is the same in both dispensations, save that in the former it was secret and concealed, whereas in the latter it is revealed and open,† it was natural for Schwenckfeld to have recourse to the familiar view of his opponents, that faith in the case of the patriarchs was "the assurance of things hoped for"—that is to say a strictly personal act, a voluntary trust in divinely promised blessings.‡ It could, therefore, "make all future things present," just as was the case in the common evangelical conception of the term. On the other hand, where he adhered strictly to his usual definition of faith, he was bound to secure the salvation of the Old Testament saints by the only other available expedient—the saving process must be idealized. The patriarchs must be represented as waiting in the "vestibule of Hades," "as in a prison,"§ for the infusion of that peculiar physico-spiritual principle from the flesh of the risen and deified Jesus which, as we have seen, was Schwenckfeld's normal conception of redemption. Either therefore faith becomes for the time a strictly personal act, and the whole mystical theory breaks down at the point of its contact with the individual moral agent, or else, the logic of the system being preserved, the fathers under the old

\* A 655.

† A 58b.

‡ Cf. Heb. xi. 1. It was precisely this word, *ἐπιβρασις*, in the definition of faith, however, that led Schwenckfeld to conceive of this divine gift as a substantive and non-personal principle.

§ A 61a.





covenant could not really partake of this hyperphysical and unethical salvation.

With this exposition of Schwenckfeld's view of faith we may conclude, having thus traced the entire circle of his speculations so far as they bear upon his participation in the eucharistic controversy of his age.\* We have sought to interpret the man in the light of the historical situation in which he found so much to oppose, and then in the light of his own positive contribution to the solution of the problem that perplexed him and his contemporaries. It will have appeared, no doubt, that, like most of the extremists of that day, he had in the facts themselves an ample justification for the exercise of his protesting spirit; but that he likewise failed to grasp the essence of the evangelical reformation in the full depth of its meaning, and therefore failed also to meet the necessities of the case with a superior message. His negations were more timely and valuable than his affirmations. His diagnosis did him more credit than the treatment he prescribed. An ardent champion of the claims of subjective piety and the exemplification of the religious graces in daily conduct, his practice not seldom revealed, by its felicitous inconsistency with his theorizing, the truly Protestant secret of the adjustment between faith and works, between the inner activities of the redeemed soul and its outward manifestations in the sphere of all communal life. A strong and beautiful character, he often succeeded in transcending the limitations of his one basal error, the deification of the flesh of Christ, and overcame the mystical indefiniteness of his speculations; and where he could not do this to the satisfaction of

\* Such minor facts as his peculiar emphasis upon the necessity of strict ecclesiastical discipline and sincere piety on the part of the pastors administering the Supper may be passed over in silence. They simply afford another illustration of what, we hope, has become thoroughly clear from the discussion, that this radical reformer was governed on all practical questions by such deeply religious interests that time and again he laid stress upon considerations which must be regarded as logically incompatible with his basal principles. For if God needs no means of grace and never confers gifts through creaturely instrumentalities, why should such rigorous Donatistic standards be applied to preacher or communicants? If faith operates magically, apart from all external and sensible realities, if in essence it is an emanation from God, what need is there of regarding either the person or the office of the celebrant? Here, too, the devout man was much better than his ill-phrased creed. Equally unnecessary is the inquiry concerning the effects of the Supper upon unbelievers. Not having the "spiritual discernment of faith," they cannot receive the innersacramental gift; they cannot take part in the feast without being condemned, even though the act of communing may symbolize to their own or other minds the significance of the redemptive fact of the Saviour's death. Cf. B 78a and A 800a.



his opponents, he yet succeeded by the sheer force of his piety in winning to himself a band of devoted followers who might indeed in years to come forget some of his theological vagaries, but who would ever sacredly cherish the heritage of his prayers and labors in behalf of a pure evangelical faith, a truly spiritual Christianity.

But the ultimate test must take account chiefly of the positive rather than of the merely negative contribution which Schwenckfeld tried to make toward the solution of the great problem, the central question of human existence, the clear positing of which was the genesis of the Reformation—that of the soul's relation to God. We have seen how largely Schwenckfeld seems to have answered the question in the very terms of the Protestant theology, in the very language of the Bible. It is hoped, however, that the exhibition of the apparent affinities and similarities between Schwenckfeld and his evangelical opponents will have served by contrast to sharpen and deepen the impression which we believe his works must make upon every candid reader—that of the radical and irreconcilable difference between his and the traditional conception of the essence of Christianity. With the fondness of a genuine mystic to express his thoughts and feelings in the hallowed texts of Scripture, he failed to see how illogical and impossible it was to make these words bear the strain of a system of speculation which might indeed preserve the supernatural and Christocentric character of the divine revelation, but which could not do justice to the fundamentally ethical and personal needs of the religious subject. In his polemic against the external ecclesiasticism of his age, he was justified in coming forward as a spokesman for the rights of that inward religious freedom which could discard all priestly mediation and emphasize the great truth, that the soul can and may enjoy direct communion with the Infinite Spirit. But after all allowances are made on the score of the harsh angularities of his diverse opponents, his manifold inconsistencies in attempting to give his practical reform endeavors a speculative basis must likewise be freely acknowledged. That he was a mystic was his strength and glory: it was precisely his mysticism that gave him kinship with the master-minds of his age, above all with Luther and Calvin, and enabled him, albeit in a one-sided and criticisable manner, to express many an evangelical principle with an unsurpassed clearness and force. But that in his polemic zeal he permitted himself to sacrifice the biblical basis of a genuinely Christian mysticism, this was the speculative error that exposed his whole system to attack and detracted from its many practical



excellencies.\* For this cardinal theory of the deification of the flesh or humanity of Christ, and the necessity of identifying redemption with a substantive ingrafting into the soul of the very essence of the divine-human nature of Christ, continually interfered with his attempt to vindicate a place for the concrete realities of the historical Church. The Bible was, to be sure, the book of books; but so sharp was the separation between the inner and outer Word, and so one-sided was the emphasis upon the absolute necessity and the all-sufficiency of the former to the verge of a possible exclusion of the latter, that in spite of his reverence for the Scriptures and his willingness in practice to make them the norm of his faith and conduct, he really had no logical warrant for his religious devotion to the sacred text: there was no adequate nexus between the letter and the spirit, between the "historical" and the "spiritual" understanding of the Word. Much less can his doctrine of the sacraments commend itself to the reason. The inner transaction has no necessary, not even a dialectic, connection with the outward rite. Yet again we are counseled to study the true purpose of the eucharist, and to console ourselves with the assurance that "in the use of the sacrament by faith" grace is communicated. But when this middle term "faith" is investigated, we are once more forced to conclude that however strongly Schwenckfeld wished to remain loyal to the confessedly divine institutions of the Church, he had no logical ground for regarding the sacraments as anything more than symbolic and didactic ceremonies. The right use of them, like the right interpretation of the Scriptures, demands faith; but faith itself is a gift of God that

\* The application of the term "mystical" to those mysterious elements in Christianity which pertain to the direct contact and union between the finite and the Infinite Spirit is too common and convenient to be ruthlessly set aside. Schwenckfeld, it is true, reared his mysticism upon a faulty doctrinal basis, and therefore he also exceeded the bounds of propriety even in his negative attitude toward the importance of the historical Church and her means of grace. But nothing is gained by simply branding him as a mystic. The best elements of his "mysticism" simply reflect the deepest verities of the Christian religion as set forth by John and Paul, by Athanasius and Augustine, by Luther and Calvin. It would be easy to find in all of these writers precisely the same "mystical indefiniteness" that appears in the unfathomable words of the Saviour to his disciples: "Abide in me, and I in you," words which have never either by inspired or uninspired dialectics been resolved into any simpler or more fully comprehensible terms. On the general subject of the relation of mysticism to Christianity, see Ullmann, *Das Wesen des Christentums*, 4th ed., 1854, and his article, "Das Wesen des Christentums und die Mystik," in the *Theolog. Studien und Kritiken*, 1852, H. 3, pp. 535-614; compare especially the passages cited on page 600 from Calvin's *Institutes* to show the truly mystical vein in this great theologian.



neither requires nor admits any external mediation—a possession, therefore, which can be neither increased nor diminished by using or not using the appointed ordinance of worship. The Lord is indeed truly present at his table; not in, with, or under the elements, nor under their accidents, but to the faith of the worthy communicant. The question, however, recurs: How can the presence be a real one, in the spiritual sense of the term, when faith itself is reduced to a finely corporeal, a hyperphysical yet mechanically acting effluence from God through the deified flesh of the Redeemer? The benefits to be received in the sacrament may, it will be remembered, be presented almost in the language of the Reformed theologians. Yet how different in Schwenckfeld is the significance of such terms as redemption, regeneration, justification, eating and drinking the flesh and blood of the Son of man! With all his insistence upon the true humanity of Christ, he could not logically avoid the evil consequences of his theory that redemption necessitated a deliverance from the very estate of creaturehood; his system has a profoundly anti-natural as well as anti-personal tendency, and both his conception of human nature had to be modified in order to permit a real incarnation of the Son of God, and his notion of personality had to be conformed to the requirements of the strictly magical and unethical operation by which God makes the soul a “partaker of the divine nature.” His fundamental irrationality, that the human nature of Christ became essentially divine and yet remained truly human, presented alike to reason and to faith an impossible basis upon which to rest. A spiritualist dominated by the formulas of the new-found evangelicalism, he had no proper place in his system of speculations for the person and work of the Holy Spirit. Herein lies the difference between him and, so far as the eucharistic controversy is concerned, his nearest spiritual kinsmen, the leaders of the Reformed Church. Both he and they sought to find in faith the psychological nexus between the divine blessing and the sinful soul; but whereas they rose to a clear apprehension of the specific function of the Spirit in the application of grace, whether through the sacraments or apart from all such means, Schwenckfeld was compelled by the logic of his primary error to transform those genuinely mystical passages of Scripture that teach the gracious but mysterious operations of the Spirit directly upon the heart into a highly speculative but false mysticism. He labored to have the façades of his structure present the familiar characteristics of evangelical orthodoxy, and he succeeded in making the edifice serve as a delightful sanctuary





for many a deeply pious nature; but he could not with all his wealth of architectural ornamentation conceal the weakness of that imposing pretension that was everywhere made to serve as the foundation for the building, the unscriptural and irrational dictum that the humanity of Jesus Christ is divinized yet remains essentially the same.

But if in spite of this basal speculative error Schwenckfeld could nevertheless achieve so large a measure of real success, we must be prepared to estimate at their true worth those elements of his system of thought and those factors in his personal influence that impressed so many of his contemporaries with the excellence of his life and work. His noble birth, the graces of his person and the charm of his manner, his eloquent pleas for religious toleration and concord, the warmth and beauty of his piety doubtless served to disarm criticism and inspire confidence. Moreover, the almost feminine receptivity of his nature had led him to try to approximate, as best he could, the distinctive peculiarities of the new evangelical message: in many a noble paragraph he shows how deeply he had grasped the inmost essence of Protestantism. Indeed, the skill and, where skill availed not, the unthinking boldness with which he sought to fuse heterogeneous and really incompatible elements into a unitary system of theological speculation easily conveyed to congenial spirits, to minds of a contemplative rather than a logical cast, the impression that his conception of Christianity offered not only the practical advantages of the common understanding of the rediscovered Gospel but also the superior claims of a deeper, because more mystical and less one-sided, interpretation of the facts of our religious experience. With all his exegetical shortcomings, moreover, he not seldom enjoyed a spiritual vision that revealed with the clearness and certainty of intuitive knowledge the manifold deficiencies of his opponents. Like all spiritualists he was a stubborn protestant against the existing order of things, and therein, no doubt, is to be found his noblest service to the cause of truth. On the fundamental questions concerning the relation of the Spirit to the Word, the bearing of religious belief upon life, and the nature of the Church and her sacraments,—the three points that engaged the chief attention of all the leading dissenters,\*—he uttered judgments and forged arguments which historical Christianity has ever showed its need of having impressed upon its inmost consciousness. He was neither a creative religious genius nor even a talented ecclesiastical organizer; but his criticism of the theology and the

\* Cf. Hegler, *Geist und Schrift bei Sebastian Franck*, p. 16.



religion of his day was a valuable positive contribution to the purity and strength of the evangelical movement as a whole. His best ideas are those of a genuinely Christian, a specifically Protestant mysticism, and these truths need emphatic republication in every age that is oppressed with an external ecclesiasticism or a lifeless orthodoxy. His mysticism had its ample justification, as a critical and protesting force, both in the facts of the divine revelation and in the events of contemporary history. If he failed of thorough success in his own time, and if the Church since then has found little use for some of the fantastic elements of his mysticism, it is only because, like the more radical dissenters, though not to the same extent, he failed to appreciate the best that his contemporaries had already achieved, and to realize the historic necessities of the case with which he was called upon to deal—the necessity of a truly rational faith, a genuinely scientific theology, that must serve as the guide to ethical conduct; the necessity of the objectively fixed Word that must repress the excesses of mere subjectivism; and the necessity of the divinely established Church that must after some sort have real means of grace. His mysticism, indeed, bravely sought to cope with these stern necessities of the situation. By the nature of the case, however, only a partial success could be achieved. But the measure of this success is a noble historic monument to the amount of spiritual truth which, despite the errors with which it was combined in his heterogeneous system, exerted so beneficent an influence upon his diverse opponents as well as upon the generations of his noble followers.

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